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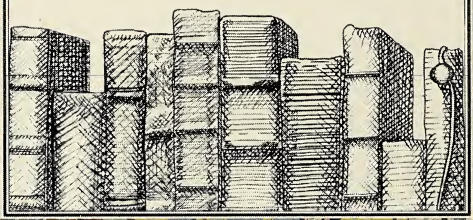


EDWARDS'S EDITION OF

THE

CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

Barlow sculp

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO,

A

GOTHIC STORY.

TRANSLATED

BY

WILLIAM MARSHAL, GENT.

FROM THE ORIGINAL ITALIAN

OF ONUPHRIO MURALTO,

CANON OF THE CHURCH OF ST. NICHOLAS

AT OTRANTO.

THE SIXTH EDITION.

PARMA.

PRINTED BY BODONI, FOR

J. EDWARDS, BOOKSELLER OF LONDON.

MDCCXCI.

. . . . . *Vanae*
Fingentur species, tamen ut pes, et caput uni
Reddantur formae . . . . . .

Hor.

PR
3757
W2C35
1791
SCDNB

TO THE HONOURABLE

AND INGENIOUS AUTHOR

OF THE

CASTLE OF OTRANTO.

Thou sweet Enchanter! at whose Nod
The airy Train of Phantoms rise
Who dost but wave thy potent Rod,
And *Marble* bleeds, and *Canvas* sighs

By thee decoy'd with curious fear
We tread thy Castle's dreary Round;
Tho horrid all we see and hear,
Thy Horrors charm while they confound.

Full well hast thou pursued the Road,
The Magic Road thy *Master* laid,
And hast with gratefull skill, bestow'd
An off'ring worthy of his shade.

Again his Manners he may trace,
Again his Characters may see,
In soft Matild, Miranda's Grace
And his own Prospero in thee.

C. Birch.

PREFACE

TO THE

FIRST EDITION.

The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of *England*. It was printed at *Naples*, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear. The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity; but the language

and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The stile is the purest *Italian*. If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the æra of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards. There is no other circumstance in the work, that can lead us to guess at the period in which the scene is laid: the names of the actors are evidently fictitious, and probably disguised on purpose; yet the *Spanish* names of the domestics seem to indicate that this work was not composed, until the establishment of the *Arragonian* Kings in *Naples* had made *Spanish* appel-

lations familiar in that country. The beauty of the diction, and the zeal of the author (moderated, however by singular judgment) concur to make me think that the date of the composition was little antecedent to that of the impression. Letters were then in their most flourishing state in *Italy*, and contributed to dispel the empire of superstition, at that time so forcibly attacked by the reformers. It is not unlikely that an artful priest might endeavour to turn their own arms on the innovators; and might avail himself of his abilities as an author to confirm the populace in their ancient errors and superstitions. If this was his view, he has certain-

ly acted with signal address. Such a work as the following would enslave a hundred vulgar minds beyond half the books of controversy that have been written from the days of *Luther* to the present hour.

This solution of the author's motives is however offered as a mere conjecture. Whatever his views were, or whatever effects the execution of them might have, his work can only be laid before the public at present as a matter of entertainment. Even as such, some apology for it is necessary. Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events, are exploded now even from romances.

That was not the case when our author wrote; much less when the story itself is supposed to have happened. Belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the *manners* of the times, who should omit all mention of them. He is not bound to believe them himself, but he must represent his actors as believing them.

If this *air* of the *miraculous* is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. Allow the possibility of the facts, and all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation. There is no bombast, no similies, flowers, di-

gressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Every thing tends directly to the catastrophe. Never is the reader's attention relaxed. The rules of the drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece. The characters are well drawn, and still better maintained. Terror, the author's principal engine, prevents the story from ever languishing; and it is so often contrasted by pity, that the mind is kept up in a constant vicissitude of interesting passions.

Some persons may perhaps think the characters of the domestics too little serious for the general cast of the story; but besides their opposition to the prin-

cipal personages, the art of the author is very observable in his conduct of the subalterns. They discover many passages essential to the story, which could not be well brought to light but by their *naivetè* and simplicity: In particular, the womanish terror and foibles of *Bianca*, in the last chapter, conduce essentially towards advancing the catastrophe.

It is natural for a translator to be prejudiced in favour of his adopted work. More impartial readers may not be so much struck with the beauties of this piece as I was. Yet I am not blind to my author's defects. I could wish he had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this; that *the*

sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation. I doubt whether, in his time, any more than at present, ambition curbed its appetite of dominion from the dread of so remote a punishment. And yet this moral is weakened by that less direct insinuation, that even such anathema may be diverted by devotion to St. *Nicholas*. Here the interest of the Monk plainly gets the better of the judgment of the author. However, with all its faults, I have no doubt but the *English* reader will be pleased with a sight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and

the rigid purity of the sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable. Should it meet with the success I hope for, I may be encouraged to re-print the original *Italian*, though it will tend to depreciate my own labour. Our language falls far short of the charms of the *Italian*, both for variety and harmony. The latter is peculiarly excellent for simple narrative. It is difficult in *English to relate* without falling too low or rising too high; a fault obviously occasioned by the little care taken to speak pure language in common conversation. Every *Italian* or *Frenchman* of any rank piques himself on

speaking his own tongue correctly and with choice. I cannot flatter myself with having done justice to my author in this respect: his stile is as elegant, as his conduct of the passions is masterly. It is pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for, the theatre.

I will detain the reader no longer, but to make one short remark. Though the machinery is invention, and the names of the actors imaginary, I cannot but believe, that the ground-work of the story is founded on truth. The scene is undoubtedly laid in some real castle. The author seems frequently, without design,

to describe particular parts. *The chamber*, says he, *on the right-hand; the door on the left-hand; the distance from the chapel to* Conrad's *apartment:* These and other passages are strong presumptions that the author had some certain building in his eye. Curious persons, who have leisure to employ in such researches, may possibly discover in the *Italian* writers the foundation on which our author has built. If a catastrophe, at all resembling that which he describes, is believed to have given rise to this work, it will contribute to interest the reader, and will make the Castle of *Otranto* a still more moving story.

SONNET
TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY MARY COKE.

The gentle Maid, whose hapless tale
These melancholy pages speak;
Say, gracious Lady, shall she fail
To draw the tear adown thy cheek?

No; never was thy pitying breast
Insensible to human woes;
Tender, tho' firm, it melts distrest
For weaknesses it never knows.

Oh! guard the marvels I relate
Of fell ambition scourg'd by fate,
From reason's peevish blame.
Blest with thy smile, my dauntless sail
I dare expand to Fancy's gale,
For sure thy smiles are Fame.

H. W.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND EDITION.

The favourable manner in which this little piece has been received by the public, calls upon the author to explain the grounds on which he composed it. But before he opens those motives, it is fit that he should ask pardon of his readers for having offered his work to them under the borrowed personage of a trans-

lator. As diffidence of his own abilities, and the novelty of the attempt, were his sole inducements to assume that disguise, he flatters himself he shall appear excuseable. He resigned his performance to the impartial judgment of the public; determined to let it perish in obscurity, if disapproved; nor meaning to avow such a trifle, unless better judges should pronounce that he might own it without a blush.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of Romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with

success. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if in the latter species Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old Romances. The actions, sentiments, conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion.

The author of the following pages thought it possible to reconcile the two kinds. Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention,

and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles and witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character: whereas in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue. The actors seem to lose their senses, the moment the laws of

Nature have lost their tone. As the public have applauded the attempt, the author must not say he was entirely unequal to the task he had undertaken: yet if the new rout he has struck out shall have paved a road for men of brighter talents, he shall own with pleasure and modesty, that he was sensible the plan was capable of receiving greater embellishments than his imagination or conduct of the passions could bestow on it.

With regard to the deportment of the domestics, on which I have touched in the former preface, I will beg leave to add a few words. The simplicity of their behaviour, almost tending to excite smiles,

which at first seem not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked designedly in that manner. My rule was Nature. However grave, important, or even melancholy, the sensations of Princes and heroes may be, they do not stamp the same affections on their domestics: at least the latter do not, or should not be made to express their passions in the same dignified tone. In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one and the *naiveté* of the other, sets the pathetic of the former in a stronger light. The very impatience which a reader feels, while delayed by the coar-

se pleasantries of vulgar actors from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves, that he has been artfully interested in the depending event. But I had higher authority than my own opinion for this conduct. That great master of nature, *Shakespeare*, was the model I copied. Let me ask if his tragedies of *Hamlet* and *Julius Cæsar* would not lose a considerable share of their spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of *Polonius*, and the clumsy jests of the *Roman* citizens were omitted, or vested in heroics? Is not the eloquence of

Antony, the nobler and affectedly-unaffected oration of *Brutus*, artificially exalted by the rude bursts of nature from the mouths of their auditors? These touches remind one of the *Grecian* sculptor, who to convey the idea of a Colossus within the dimensions of a seal, inserted a little boy measuring his thumb.

No, says *Voltaire* in his edition of *Corneille*, this mixture of buffoonery and solemnity is intolerable — *Voltaire* is a genius* —

* The following remark is foreign to the present question, yet excusable in an *Englishman*, who is willing to think that the severe criticisms of so masterly a writer as *Voltaire* on our immortal countryman, may have been the effusions of wit and precipitation, rather than the result of judgment and attention. May not the Critic's skill in the force and powers of our language have been as incorrect and in-

but not of *Shakespeare*'s magnitude. Without recurring to disputable authority, I appeal from *Voltaire* to himself. I shall not avail myself of his former encomiums on our mighty poet; though the *French* critic has twice translated the same speech in

competent as his knowledge of our history? of the latter his own pen has dropped glaring evidence. In his Preface to *Thomas Corneille*'s Earl of *Essex*, Monsieur *de Voltaire* allows that the truth of history has been grossly perverted in that piece. In excuse he pleads, that when *Corneille* wrote, the *Noblesse* of *France* were much unread in *English* story; but now, says the commentator, that they study it, such misrepresentations would not be suffered —— yet forgetting that the period of ignorance is lapsed, and that it is not very necessary to instruct the knowing, he undertakes from the overflowing of his own reading to give the Nobility of his own country a detail of Queen *Elizabeth*'s favourites——of whom, says he, *Robert Dudley* was the first, and the Earl of *Leicester* the second.——Could one have believed that it could be necessary to inform Monsieur *de Voltaire* himself, that *Robert Dudley* and the Earl of *Leicester* were the same person?

Hamlet, some years ago in admiration, latterly in derision; and I am sorry to find that his judgment grows weaker, when it ought to be farther matured. But I shall make use of his own words, delivered on the general topic of the theatre, when he was neither thinking to recommend or decry *Shakespeare*'s practice; consequently at a moment when *Voltaire* was impartial. In the preface to his *Enfant Prodigue*, that exquisite piece of which I declare my admiration, and which, should I live twenty years longer, I trust I shall never attempt to ridicule, he has these words, speaking of Comedy (but equally applicable to Tragedy, if

Tragedy is, as surely it ought to be, a picture of human life; nor can I conceive why occasional pleasantry ought more to be banished from the tragic scene, than pathetic seriousness from the comic) *On y voit un mêlange de sérieux et de plaisanterie, de comique et de touchant*; souvent même une seule avanture *produit tous ces contrastes. Rien n'est si commun qu'une maison, dans laquelle* un pere gronde, une fille occupée de sa passion pleure; *le fils se moque des deux, et quelques parens prennent part différemment à la scene*, etc. *Nous n'inférons pas de-là que toute Comédie doive avoir des scenes de bouffonerie et des scenes attendrissantes: il*

y a beaucoup de très-bonnes pieces où il ne regne que de la gayeté; d'autres toutes sérieuses; d'autres mêlangées: d'autres où l'attendrissement va jusques aux larmes: il ne faut donner l'exclusion à aucun genre: *et si l'on me demandoit, quel genre est le meilleur, je repondrois, celui qui est le mieux traité*. Surely if a Comedy may be *toute sérieuse*, Tragedy may now and then, soberly, be indulged in a smile. Who shall proscribe it? shall the critic, who in self-defence declares that *no kind* ought to be excluded from Comedy, give laws to *Shakespeare?*

I am aware that the preface from whence I have quoted these passages, does not stand in

Monsieur *de Voltaire*'s name, but in that of his editor; yet who doubts that the editor and author were the same person? or where is the editor, who has so happily possessed himself of his author's stile and brilliant ease of argument? These passages were indubitably the genuine sentiments of that great writer. In his epistle to *Maffei*, prefixed to his *Merope*, he delivers almost the same opinion, though I doubt with a little irony. I will repeat his words, and then give my reason for quoting them. After translating a passage in *Maffei*'s *Merope*, Monsieur *de Voltaire* adds, *Tous ces traits sont naifs: tout y est convenable à ceux que vous in-*

troduisez sur la scene, et aux mœurs que vous leur donnez. *Ces familiarités naturelles eussent été, à ce que je crois, bien reçues dans Athenes; mais Paris et notre parterre veulent une autre espece de simplicité*. I doubt, I say, whether there is not a grain of sneer in this and other passages of that epistle; yet the force of truth is not damaged by being tinged with ridicule. *Maffei* was to represent a *Grecian* story: Surely the *Athenians* were as competent judges of *Grecian* manners and of the propriety of introducing them, as the *Parterre* of *Paris*. On the contrary, says *Voltaire* (and I cannot but admire his reasoning) there were but ten

thousand citizens at *Athens*, and *Paris* has near eight hundred thousand inhabitants, among whom one may reckon thirty thousand judges of dramatic works. — Indeed! — but allowing so numerous a tribunal, I believe this is the only instance in which it was ever pretended that thirty thousand persons, living near two thousand years after the æra in question, were, upon the mere face of the poll, declared better judges than the *Grecians* themselves of what ought to be the manners of a Tragedy written on a *Grecian* story.

I will not enter into a discussion of the *espece de simplicité*, which the *Parterre* of *Paris* de-

mands, nor of the shackles with which *the thirty thousand judges* have cramped their poetry, the chief merit of which, as I gather from repeated passages in *The New Commentary on* Corneille, consists in vaulting in spite of those fetters; a merit which, if true, would reduce poetry from the lofty effort of imagination, to a puerile and most contemptible labour — *difficiles nugæ* with a witness! I cannot however help mentioning a couplet, which, to my *English* ears, always sounded as the flattest and most trifling instance of circumstantial propriety; but which *Voltaire*, who has dealt so severely with nine parts in ten of *Corneille*'s

works, has singled out to defend in *Racine*;

De son appartement cette porte est prochaine,
Et cette autre conduit dans celui de la Reine.

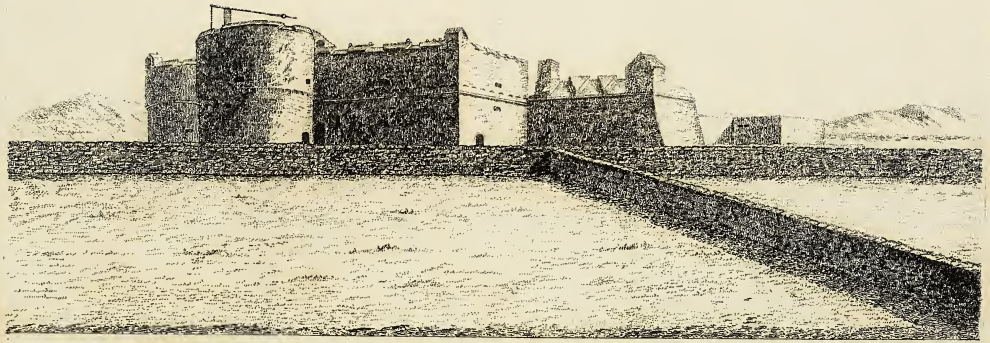
In *English*,

To Cæsar's *closet through this door you come,*
And t'other leads to the Queen's drawing—room.

Unhappy *Shakespeare!* hadst thou made *Rosencraus* inform his compeer, *Guildenstern*, of the ichnography of the palace of *Copenhagen*, instead of presenting us with a moral dialogue between the Prince of *Denmark* and the grave-digger, the illuminated pit of *Paris* would have been instructed *a second time* to adore thy talents.

The result of all I have said, is, to shelter my own daring under

the canon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced. I might have pleaded, that having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: But I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention, unless I could have marked my work with genius as well as with originality. Such as it is, the Public have honoured it sufficiently, whatever rank their suffrages allot to it.



THE CASTLE

OF

OTRANTO

A

GOTHIC STORY, *&c.*

CHAPTER I.

MANFRED, Prince of *Otranto*, had one son and one daughter: The latter a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called *Matilda*. *Conrad*, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to *Matilda*. *Manfred* had contracted a marriage for his son with the Marquis of *Vicenza*'s daughter,

Isabella; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of *Manfred*, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as *Conrad*'s infirm state of health would permit. *Manfred*'s impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former indeed, apprehending the severity of their Prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on this precipitation. *Hippolita*, his wife, an amiable lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given him but one heir. His tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses: They attributed this hasyt wedding to the Prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy,

which was said to have pronounced, that *the Castle and Lordship of* Otranto *should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it*. It was difficult to make any sense of this prophecy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young *Conrad*'s birth-day was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the Castle, and every thing ready for beginning the divine office, when *Conrad* himself was missing. *Manfred* impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, dispatched one of his attendants to summon the young Prince. The servant, who had not staid long enough to have crossed the court to *Conrad*'s apart-

ment, came running back breathless, in a frantick manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. The company were struck with terror and amazement. The Princess *Hippolita*, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. *Manfred*, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously, what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the court-yard; and at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, Oh! the helmet! the helmet! In the mean time, some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. *Manfred*, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of

what occasioned this strange confusion. *Matilda* remained endeavouring to assist her mother, and *Isabella* staid for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck *Manfred*'s eyes was a group of his servants endeavouring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight. What are ye doing? cried *Manfred* wrathfully; where is my son? A volley of voices replied, Oh! My Lord! the Prince! the Prince! the helmet! the helmet! Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what; he advanced hastily,—but what a sight for a father's eyes!—he beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred

times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune had happened, and above all, the tremendous phaenomenon before him, took away the Prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision; and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined the fatal casque; nor could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young Prince, divert the eyes of *Manfred* from the portent before him. All who had known his partial fondness for young *Conrad*, were as much surprized at their Prince's insensibility, as

thunder-struck themselves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpse into the hall, without receiving the least direction from *Manfred*. As little was he attentive to the Ladies who remained in the chapel: On the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy Princesses, his wife and daughter, the first sounds that dropped from *Manfred*'s lips were, take care of the lady *Isabella*.

The domestics, without observing the singularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their mistress, to consider it as peculiarly addressed to her situation, and flew to her assistance. They conveyed her to her chamber more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the strange circumstances she heard, except the death of her son. *Matilda*, who doated on her mother, smothered her own grief and amazement,

and thought of nothing but assisting and comforting her afflicted parent. *Isabella*, who had been treated by *Hippolita* like a daughter, and who returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection, was scarce less assiduous about the Princess; at the same time endeavouring to partake and lessen the weight of sorrow which she saw *Matilda* strove to suppress, for whom she had conceived the warmest sympathy of friendship. Yet her own situation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young *Conrad*, except commiseration; and she was not sorry to be delivered from a marriage which had promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of *Manfred*, who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had imprinted her mind with terror, from

his causeless rigour to such amiable Princesses as *Hippolita* and *Matilda*.

While the Ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her bed, *Manfred* remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd which the strangeness of the event had now assembled around him. The few words he articulated, tended solely to inquiries, whether any man knew from whence it could have come? Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable, as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses, a young peasant, whom rumour had drawn thither from a neighbouring village, observed that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on

the figure in black marble of *Alfonso* the Good, one of their former Princes, in the church of St. *Nicholas*. Villain! What sayest thou! cried *Manfred*, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar; how darest thou utter such treason? thy life shall pay for it. The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the Prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the Prince: Yet recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from *Manfred*'s gripe, and then with an obeisance, which discovered more jealousy of innocence, than dismay; he asked, with respect, of what he was guilty! *Manfred*, more enraged at the vigour, however decently exer-

ted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends, whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation, some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church, which stood near the castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring, that the helmet was missing from *Alfonso*'s statue. *Manfred*, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying, Villain! Monster! Sorcerer! 'tis thou hast done this! 'tis thou hast slain my son! The mob, who wanted some object within the scope of their capacities, on whom they might discharge their bewildered reasonings, caught

the words from the mouth of their Lord, and re-echoed, Ay, ay; 'tis he, 'tis he: He has stolen the helmet from good *Alfonso*'s tomb, and dashed out the brains of our young Prince with it,—never reflecting how enormous the disproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of steel before their eyes; nor how impossible it was for a youth seemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of so prodigious a weight.

The folly of these ejaculations brought *Manfred* to himself: Yet whether provoked at the peasant having observed the resemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther discovery of the absence of that in the church; or wishing to bury any such rumour under so impertinent a supposition; he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necroman-

cer, and that till the church could take cognizance of the affair, he would have the Magician, whom they had thus detected, kept prisoner under the helmet itself, which he ordered his attendants to raise, and place the young man under it; declaring he should be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furnish him.

It was in vain for the youth to represent against this preposterous sentence: In vain did *Manfred*'s friends endeavour to divert him from this savage and ill-grounded resolution. The generality were charmed with their Lord's decision, which, to their apprehensions, carried great appearance of justice, as the Magician was to be punished by the very instrument with which he had offended: Nor were they struck with the least compunction at the probability of the youth being starved, for they

firmly believed, that, by his diabolic skill, he could easily supply himself with nutriment.

Manfred thus saw his commands even chearfully obeyed; and appointing a guard with strict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the prisoner, he dismissed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the castle, in which he suffered none but his domestics to remain.

In the mean time, the care and zeal of the young Ladies had brought the Princess *Hippolita* to herself, who amidst the transports of her own sorrow, frequently demanded news of her Lord, would have dismissed her attendants to watch over him, and at last enjoined *Matilda* to leave her, and visit and comfort her father. *Matilda*, who wanted no affectionate duty to *Manfred*,

though she trembled at his austerity, obeyed the orders of *Hippolita*, whom she tenderly recommended to *Isabella*; and enquiring of the domestics for her father, was informed that he was retired to his chamber, and had commanded that nobody should have admittance to him. Concluding that he was immersed in sorrow for the death of her brother, and fearing to renew his tears by the sight of his sole remaining child, she hesitated whether she should break in upon his affliction; yet solicitude for him, backed by the commands of her mother, encouraged her to venture disobeying the orders he had given; a fault she had never been guilty of before. The gentle timidity of her nature made her pause for some minutes at his door. She heard him traverse his chamber backwards and forwards with disordered steps; a mood which increased her ap-

prehensions. She was however just going to beg admittance, when *Manfred* suddenly opened the door; and as it was now twilight, concurring with the disorder of his mind, he did not distinguish the person, but asked angrily, who it was? *Matilda* replied trembling, My dearest father, it is I, your daughter. *Manfred* stepping back hastily, cried, Begone, I do not want a daughter; and flinging back abruptly, clapped the door against the terrified *Matilda.*

She was too well acquainted with her father's impetuosity to venture a second intrusion. When she had a little recovered the shock of so bitter a reception, she wiped away her tears to prevent the additional stab that the knowledge of it would give to *Hippolita*, who questioned her in the most anxious terms on the health of *Manfred*, and how he bore his loss. *Matilda* assured her he

was well, and supported his misfortune with manly fortitude. But will he not let me see him? said *Hippolita* mournfully; will he not permit me to blend my tears with his, and shed a mother's sorrows in the bosom of her Lord? Or do you deceive me, *Matilda?* I know how *Manfred* doated on his son: Is not the stroke too heavy for him? has he not sunk under it?—You do not answer me—alas! I dread the worst!—raise me, my maidens; I will, I will see my Lord. Bear me to him instantly: He is dearer to me even than my children. *Matilda* made signs to *Isabella* to prevent *Hippolita*'s rising; and both those lovely young women were using their gentle violence to stop and calm the Princess, when a servant, on the part of *Manfred*, arrived and told *Isabella* that his Lord demanded to speak with her.

With me! cried *Isabella*. Go, said *Hippolita*, relieved by a message from her Lord: *Manfred* cannot support the sight of his own family. He thinks you less disordered than we are, and dreads the shock of my grief. Console him, dear *Isabella*, and tell him I will smother my own anguish rather than add to his.

As it was now evening, the servant, who conducted *Isabella*, bore a torch before her. When they came to *Manfred*, who was walking impatiently about the gallery, he started, and said hastily, Take away that light, and begone. Then shutting the door impetuously, he flung himself upon a bench against the wall, and bad *Isabella* sit by him. She obeyed trembling. I sent for you, Lady, said he,—and then stopped under great appearance of confusion. My Lord!—Yes, I sent for you on a matter of great moment, resumed he,—dry your tears,

young Lady—you have lost your bridegroom.—Yes, cruel fate! and I have lost the hopes of my race! but *Conrad* was not worthy of your beauty—How! my Lord, said *Isabella*; sure you do not suspect me of not feeling the concern I ought: My duty and affection would have always—Think no more of him, interrupted *Manfred*; he was a sickly puny child, and heaven has perhaps taken him away, that I might not trust the honours of my house on so frail a foundation. The line of *Manfred* calls for numerous supports. My foolish fondness for that boy blinded the eyes of my prudence—but it is better as it is. I hope, in a few years, to have reason to rejoice at the death of *Conrad*.

Words cannot paint the astonishment of *Isabella*. At first she apprehended that grief had disordered *Manfred*'s understanding. Her next thought sug-

gested that this strange discourse was designed to ensnare her: She feared that *Manfred* had perceived her indifference for his son: And in consequence of that idea she replied, Good my Lord, do not doubt my tenderness: My heart would have accompanied my hand. *Conrad* would have engrossed all my care; and wherever fate shall dispose of me, I shall always cherish his memory, and regard your Highness and the virtuous *Hippolita* as my parents. Curse on *Hippolita!* cried *Manfred:* Forget her from this moment as I do. In short, Lady, you have missed a husband undeserving of your charms: They shall now be better disposed of. Instead of a sickly boy, you shall have a husband in the prime of his age, who will know how to value your beauties, and who may expect a numerous offspring. Alas! my Lord, said *Isabella*, my mind is too sadly en-

grossed by the recent catastrophe in your family to think of another marriage. If ever my father returns, and it shall be his pleasure, I shall obey, as I did when I consented to give my hand to your son: But until his return, permit me to remain under your hospitable roof, and employ the melancholy hours in assuaging yours, *Hippolita*'s, and the fair *Matilda*'s affliction.

I desired you once before, said *Manfred* angrily, not to name that woman: From this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me;—in short, *Isabella*, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself.—Heavens! cried *Isabella*, waking from her delusion, what do I hear! You! my Lord! You! My father-in-law! the father of *Conrad!* the husband of the virtuous and tender *Hippolita!*—I tell you, said *Manfred* imperiously, *Hippolita* is no longer my

wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness. My fate depends on having sons,—and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes. At those words he seized the cold hand of *Isabella*, who was half-dead with fright and horror. She shrieked and started from him. *Manfred* rose to pursue her, when the moon, which was now up and gleamed in at the opposite casement, presented to his sight the plumes of the fatal helmet, which rose to the height of the windows, waving backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner, and accompanied with a hollow and rustling sound. *Isabella*, who gathered courage from her situation, and who dreading nothing so much as *Manfred*'s pursuit of his declaration, cried, Look! my Lord; see, heaven itself declares against your impious intentions!—Heaven nor

hell shall impede my designs, said *Manfred*, advancing again to seize the Princess. At that instant the portrait of his grandfather, which hung over the bench where they had been sitting, uttered a deep sigh, and heaved its breast. *Isabella*, whose back was turned to the picture, saw not the motion, nor knew whence the sound came, but started, and said, Hark, my Lord! What sound was that? and at the same time made towards the door. *Manfred*, distracted between the flight of *Isabella*, who had now reached the stairs, and yet unable to keep his eyes from the picture which began to move, had however advanced some steps after her, still looking backwards on the portrait, when he saw it quit its pannel, and descend on the floor with a grave and melancholy air. Do I dream? cried *Manfred*, returning; or are the devils themselves in league a-

gainst me? Speak, infernal spectre! or, if thou art my grandsire, why dost thou too conspire against thy wretched descendant, who too dearly pays for—— ere he could finish the sentence, the vision sighed again, and made a sign to *Manfred* to follow him. Lead on! cried *Manfred;* I will follow thee to the gulph of perdition. The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right-hand. *Manfred* accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped to with violence by an invisible hand. The Prince, collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted his utmost efforts. Since hell will not satisfy my curiosity, said *Manfred*, I will use the

human means in my power for preserving my race; *Isabella* shall not escape me.

The Lady, whose resolution had given way to terror the moment she had quitted *Manfred*, continued her flight to the bottom of the principal staircase. There she stopped, not knowing whither to direct her steps, nor how to escape from the impetuosity of the Prince. The gates of the castle she knew were locked, and guards placed in the court. Should she, as her heart prompted her, go and prepare *Hippolita* for the cruel destiny that awaited her; she did not doubt but *Manfred* would seek her there, and that his violence would incite him to double the injury he meditaded, without leaving room for them to avoid the impetuosity of his passions. Delay might give him time to reflect on the horrid measures he had conceived,

or produce some circumstance in her favour, if she could for that night at least avoid his odious purpose.——Yet where conceal herself! how avoid the pursuit he would infallibly make throughout the castle! As these thoughts passed rapidly through her mind, she recollected a subterraneous passage which led from the vaults of the castle to the church of St. *Nicholas*. Could she reach the altar before she was overtaken, she knew even *Manfred*'s violence would not dare to profane the sacredness of the place; and she determined, if no other means of deliverance offered, to shut herself up for ever among the holy virgins, whose convent was contiguous to the cathedral. In this resolution, she seized a lamp that burned at the foot of the staircase, and hurried towards the secret passage.

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloysters;

and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges, were reechoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror;—yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of *Manfred* urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave,—yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered, and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. Her blood curdled; she concluded it was *Manfred*. Every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed

into her mind. She condemned her rash flight, which had thus exposed her to his rage in a place where her cries were not likely to draw any body to her assistance.—Yet the sound seemed not to come from behind—if *Manfred* knew where she was, he must have followed her: She was still in one of the cloysters, and the steps she had heard were too distinct to proceed from the way she had come. Cheared with this reflection, and hoping to find a friend in whoever was not the Prince, she was going to advance, when a door that stood a-jar, at some distance to the left, was opened gently: But ere her lamp, which she held up, could discover who opened it, the person retreated precipitately on seeing the light.

Isabella, whom every incident was sufficient to dismay, hesitated whether she should proceed. Her dread of *Man-*

fred soon outweighed every other terror. The very circumstance of the person avoiding her, gave her a sort of courage. It could only be, she thought, some domestic belonging to the castle. Her gentleness had never raised her an enemy, and conscious innocence made her hope that, unless sent by the Prince's order to seek her, his servants would rather assist than prevent her flight. Fortifying herself with these reflections, and believing by what she could observe, that she was near the mouth of the subterraneous cavern, she approached the door that had been opened; but a sudden gust of wind that met her at the door, extinguished her lamp, and left her in total darkness.

Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, ho-

peless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of *Manfred*, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crouded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every Saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair. At last, as softly as was possible, she felt for the door, and having found it, entered trembling into the vault from whence she had heard the sigh and steps. It gave her a kind of momentary joy to perceive an imperfect ray of clouded moonshine gleam from the roof of the vault, which seemed to be fallen in, and from whence hung a fragment of earth or building, she could

not distinguish which, that appeared to have been crushed inwards. She advanced eagerly towards this chasm, when she discerned a human form standing close against the wall.

She shrieked, believing it the ghost of her betrothed *Conrad*. The figure advancing, said in a submissive voice, Be not alarmed, Lady; I wil not injure you. *Isabella*, a little encouraged by the words and tone of voice of the stranger, and recollecting that this must be the person who had opened the door, recovered her spirits enough to reply, Sir, whoever you are, take pity on a wretched Princess, standing on the brink of destruction: Assist me to escape from this fatal castle, or in few moments I may be made miserable for ever. Alas! said the stranger, what can I do to assist you? I will die in your defence; but I am unacquainted with the

castle, and want——Oh! said *Isabella*, hastily interrupting him, help me but to find a trap-door that must be hereabout, and it is the greatest service you can do me, for I have not a minute to lose. Saying these words, she felt about on the pavement, and directed the stranger to search likewise for a smooth piece of brass inclosed in one of the stones. That, said she, is the lock, which opens with a spring, of which I know the secret. If we can find that, I may escape —if not, alas! courteous stranger, I fear, I shall have involved you in my misfortunes: *Manfred* will suspect you for the accomplice of my flight, and you will fall a victim to his resentment. I value not my life, said the stranger, and it will be some comfort to lose it, in trying to deliver you from his tyranny. Generous youth, said *Isabella*, how shall I ever requite——as she uttered

those words, a ray of moonshine streaming through a cranny of the ruin above shone directly on the lock they sought —Oh! transport! said *Isabella*, here is the trap-door! and taking out the key, she touched the spring, which starting aside, discovered an iron ring. Lift up the door, said the Princess. The stranger obeyed; and beneath appeared some stone steps descending into a vault totally darck. We must go down here, said *Isabella:* Follow me; dark and dismal as it is, we cannot miss our way; it leads directly to the church of St. *Nicolas*—but perhaps, added the Princess modestly, you have no reason to leave the castle, nor have I farther occasion for your service; in a few minutes I shall be safe from *Manfred*'s rage —only let me know to whom I am so much obliged. I will never quit you, said the stranger eagerly, until I have

placed you in safety—nor think me, Princess, more generous than I am; though you are my principal care—the stranger was interrupted by a sudden noise of voices that seemed approaching, and they soon distinguished these words: Talk not to me of necromancers; I tell you she must be in the castle; I will find her in spite of enchantment—Oh! heavens, cried *Isabella*, it is the voice of *Manfred!* make haste or we are ruined! and shut the trap-door after you. Saying this, she descended the steps precipitately; and as the stranger hastened to follow her, he let the door slip out of his hands: it fell, and the spring closed over it. He tried in vain to open it, not having observed *Isabella*'s method of touching the spring; nor had he many moments to make an essay. The noise of the falling door hab been heard by *Manfred*, who di

rected by the sound, hastened thither, attended by his servants with torches. It must be *Isabella*; cried *Manfred* before he entered the vault; she is escaping by the subterraneous passage, but she cannot have got far.—What was the astonishment of the Prince, when, instead of *Isabella*, the light of the torches discovered to him the young peasant, whom he thought confined under the fatal helmet! Traitor! said *Manfred*, how camest thou here? I thought thee in durance above in the court. I am no traitor, replied the young man boldly, nor am I answerable for your thoughts. Presumptuous villain! cried *Manfred*, dost thou provoke my wrath? tell me; how hast thou escaped from above? thou hast corrupted thy guards, and their lives shall answer it. My poverty, said the peasant calmly, will disculpate them: Though the ministers

of a tyrant's wrath, to thee they are faithful, and but too willing to execute the orders which you unjustly imposed upon them. Art thou so hardy as to dare my vengeance? said the Prince—but tortures shall force the truth from thee. Tell me, I will know thy accomplices. There was my accomplice! said the youth, smiling and pointing to the roof. *Manfred* ordered the torches to be held up, and perceived that one of the cheeks of the enchanted casque had forced its way through the pavement of the court, as his servants had let it fall over the peasant, and had broken through into the vault, leaving a gap through which the peasant had pressed himself some minutes before he was found by *Isabella*. Was that the way by which thou didst descend? said *Manfred*. It was; said the youth. But what noise was that, said *Manfred*,

which I heard as I entered the cloyster? A door clapped: said the peasant; I heard it as well as you. What door? said *Manfred* hastily. I am not acquainted with your castle, said the peasant; this is the first time I ever entered it; and this vault the only part of it within which I ever was. But I tell thee, said *Manfred* (wishing to find out if the youth had discovered the trap-door) it was this way I heard the noise: My servants heard it too—My Lord, interrupted one of them officiously, to be sure it was the trap-door, and he was going to make his escape. Peace! blockhead, said the Prince angrily; if he was going to escape, how should he come on this side? I will know from his own mouth what noise it was I heard. Tell me truly; thy life depends on thy veracity. My veracity is dearer to me than my life, said the

peasant; nor would I purchase the one by forfeiting the other. Indeed! young philosopher! said *Manfred* contemptuously; tell me then, what was the noise I heard? Ask me what I can answer, said he, and put me to death instantly if I tell you a lie. *Manfred* growing impatient at the steady valour and indifference of the youth, cried, Well then, thou man of truth! answer; was it the fall of the trap-door that I heard? It was; said the youth. It was! said the Prince; and how didst thou come to know there was a trap-door here? I saw the plate of brass by a gleam of moonshine; replied he. But what told thee it was a lock? said *Manfred*; How didst thou discover the secret of opening it? Providence, that delivered me from the helmet, was able to direct me to the spring of a lock; said he. Providence should have gone a little farther,

and have placed thee out of the reach of my resentment, said *Manfred:* When Providence had taught thee to open the lock, it abandoned thee for a fool, who did not know how to make use of its favours. Why didst thou not pursue the path pointed out for thy escape? Why didst thou shut the trap-door before thou hadst descended the steps? I might ask you, my Lord, said the peasant, how I, totally unacquainted with your castle, was to know that those steps led to any outlet? but I scorn to evade your questions. Wherever those steps lead to, perhaps I should have explored the way—I could not be in a worse situation than I was. But the truth is, I let the trap-door fall: Your immediate arrival followed. I had given the alarm—what imported it to me whether I was seized a minute sooner or a minute later? Thou art a resolute

villain for thy years; said *Manfred*— yet on reflection I suspect thou dost but trifle with me: Thou hast not yet told me how thou didst open the lock. That I will show you, my Lord; said the peasant; and taking up a fragment of stone that had fallen from above, he laid himself on the trap-door, and began to beat on the piece of brass that covered it; meaning to gain time for the escape of the Princess. This presence of mind, joined to the frankness of the youth, staggered *Manfred*. He even felt a disposition towards pardoning one who had been guilty of no crime. *Manfred* was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason.

While the Prince was in this suspense, a confused noise of voices echoed through the distant vaults. As the sound approached, he distinguished the clamours of some of his domestics, whom he had dispersed through the castle in search of *Isabella*, calling out, Where is my Lord? where is the Prince? Here I am; said *Manfred*, as they came nearer; have you found the Princess? the first that arrived, replied, Oh! my Lord! I am glad we have found you—Found me! said *Manfred;* have you found the Princess? We thought we had, my Lord, said the fellow, looking terrified —but—but, what? cried the Prince; has she escaped?—*Jaquez* and I, my Lord—yes, I and *Diego*, interrupted the second, who came up in still greater consternation—speak one of you at a time, said *Manfred;* I ask you where is the Princess? We do not know; said

they both together; but we are frightened out of our wits—so I think, blockheads, said *Manfred;* what is it has scared you thus?—Oh! my Lord, said *Jaquez, Diego* has seen such a sight! your Highness would not believe our eyes—What new absurdity is this! cried *Manfred*—give me a direct answer, or, by heaven—Why, my Lord, if it please your Highness to hear me, said the poor fellow; *Diego* and I—Yes, I and *Jaquez,* cried his comrade—Did not I forbid you to speak both at a time? said the Prince: You, *Jaquez,* answer; for the other fool seems more distracted than thou art; what is the matter? My gracious Lord, said *Jaquez,* if it please your Highness to hear me; *Diego* and I, according to your Highness's orders, went to search for the young Lady; but being comprehensive that we might meet the ghost of my

young Lord, your Highness's son, God rest his soul, as he has not received christian burial—Sot! cried *Manfred* in a rage, is it only a ghost then that thou hast seen? Oh! worse! worse! my Lord, cried *Diego:* I had rather have seen ten whole ghosts—Grant me patience! said *Manfred;* these blockheads distract me—out of my sight, *Diego!* and thou *Jaquez,* tell me in one word, art thou sober? art thou raving? thou wast wont to have some sense: has the other sot frightened himself and thee too! speak; what is it he fancies he has seen? Why, my Lord, replied *Jaquez* trembling, I was going to tell your Highness, that since the calamitous misfortune of my young Lord, God rest his precious soul! not one of us your Highness's faithful servants, indeed we are, my Lord, though poor men; I say, not one of us has dared to set a

foot about the castle, but two together: So *Diego* and I, thinking that my young Lady might be in the great gallery, went up there to look for her, and tell her your Highness wanted something to impart to her—O blundering fools! cried *Manfred:* And in the mean time she has made her escape, because you were afraid of goblins!—Why, thou knave! she left me in the gallery; I came from thence myself. For all that, she may be there still for ought I know, said *Jaquez;* but the devil shall have me before I seek her there again—poor *Diego!* I do not believe he will ever recover it! Recover what? said *Manfred;* am I never to learn what it is has terrified these rascals?—but I lose my time; follow me slave; I will see if she is in the gallery——For heavens's sake, my dear good Lord, cried *Jaquez,* do not go to the gallery! Satan

himself I believe is in the chamber next to the gallery——*Manfred*, who hitherto had treated the terror of his servants as an idle panic, was struck at this new circumstance. He recollected the apparition of the portrait, and the sudden closing of the door at the end of the gallery—his voice faltered, and he asked with disorder, what is in the great chamber? My Lord, said *Jaquez*, when *Diego* and I came into the gallery, he went first, for he said he had more courage than I. So when we came into the gallery, we found nobody. We looked under every bench and stool; and still we found nobody—Were all the pictures in their places? said *Manfred*. Yes, my Lord, answered *Jaquez;* but we did not think of looking behind them—Well, well! said *Manfred*, proceed. When we came to the door of the great chamber, conti-

nued *Jaquez*, we found it shut—And could not you open it? said *Manfred*. Oh! yes, my Lord; would to heaven we had not! replied he—nay, it was not I neither, it was *Diego:* he was grown fool-hardy, and would go on, though I advised him not—if ever I open a door that is shut again—Trifle not, said *Manfred* shuddering, but tell me what you saw in the great chamber on opening the door—I! my Lord! said *Jaquez*, I saw nothing; I was behind *Diego;*—but I heard the noise——*Jaquez*, said *Manfred* in a solemn tone of voice; tell me, I adjure thee by the souls of my ancestors, what was it thou sawest? what was it thou heardest? It was *Diego* saw it, my Lord, it was not I? replied *Jaquez;* I only heard the noise. *Diego* had no sooner opened the door, than he cried out, and ran back —I ran back too, and said, is it the

ghost? the ghost! No no, said *Diego*, and his hair stood an end—it is a giant I believe; he is all clad in armour, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court. As he said these words, my Lord, we heard a violent motion and the rattling of armour, as if the giant was rising, for *Diego* has told me since, that he believes the giant was lying down, for the foot and leg were stretched at length on the floor. Before we could get to the end of the gallery, we heard the door of the great chamber clap behind us, but we did not dare turn back to see if the giant was following us—yet, now I think on it, we must have heard him if he had pursued us——but for heaven's sake, good my Lord, send for the chaplain, and have the castle exorcised, for certain, it is enchanted. Ay, pray do, my Lord,

cried all the servants at once, or we must leave your Highness's service—Peace! dotards; said *Manfred*, and follow me; I will know what all this means. We! my Lord! cried they with one voice, we would not go up to the gallery for your Highness's revenue. The young peasant, who had stood silent, now spoke. Will your Highness, said he, permit me to try this adventure? my life is of consequence to nobody: I fear no bad angel, and have offended no good one. Your behaviour is above your seeming; said *Manfred*, viewing him with surprise and admiration——hereafter I will reward your bravery—but now, continued he with a sigh, I am so circumstanced, that I dare trust no eyes but my own—however, I give you leave to accompany me.

Manfred, when he first followed *Isabella* from the gallery, had gone di-

rectly to the apartment of his wife, concluding the Princess had retired thither. *Hippolita*, who knew his step, rose with anxious fondness to meet her Lord, whom she had not seen since the death of their son. She would have flown in a transport mixed of joy and grief to his bosom, but he pushed her rudely off, and said, Where is *Isabella? Isabella!* my Lord! said the astonished *Hippolita*. Yes; *Isabella;* cried *Manfred* imperiously; I want *Isabella*. My Lord, replied *Matilda*, who perceived how much his behaviour had shocked her mother, she has not been with us since your Highness summoned her to your apartment. Tell me where she is; said the Prince; I do not want to know where she has been. My good Lord, says *Hippolita*, your daughter tells you the truth: *Isabella* left us by your command, and has not returned

since;—but, my good Lord, compose yourself: Retire to your rest: This dismal day has disordered you. *Isabella* shall wait your orders in the morning. What then, you know where she is! cried *Manfred:* Tell me directly, for I will not lose an instant—and you, woman, speaking to his wife, order your chaplain to attend me forthwith. *Isabella,* said *Hippolita* calmly, is retired, I suppose, to her chamber: She is not accustomed to watch at this late hour. Gracious my Lord, continued she, let me know what has disturbed you. Has *Isabella* offended you? Trouble me not with questions, said *Manfred,* but tell me where she is. *Matilda* shall call her, said the Princess—— Sit down, my Lord, and resume your wonted fortitude.—What, art thou jealous of *Isabella,* replied he, that you wish to be present at our interview?

Good heavens! my Lord, said *Hippolita*, what is it your Highness means? Thou wilt know ere many minutes are passed; said the cruel Prince. Send your chaplain to me, and wait my pleasure here. At these words he flung out of the room in search of *Isabella:* leaving the amazed Ladies thunderstruck with his words and frantic deportment, and lost in vain conjectures on what he was meditating.

Manfred was now returning from the vault, attended by the peasant and a few of his servants whom he had obliged to accompany him. He ascended the stair-case without stopping till he arrived at the gallery, at the door of which he met *Hippolita* and her chaplain. When *Diego* had been dismissed by *Manfred*, he had gone directly to the Princess's apartment with the alarm of what he had seen. That excellent

Lady, who no more than *Manfred* doubted of the reality of the vision, yet affected to treat it as a delirium of the servant. Willing, however, to save her Lord from any additional shock, and prepared by a series of grief not to tremble at any accession to it; she determined to make herself the first sacrifice, if fate had marked the present hour for their destruction. Dismissing the reluctant *Matilda* to her rest, who in vain sued for leave to accompany her mother, and attended only by her chaplain, *Hippolita* had visited the gallery and great chamber; and now with more serenity of soul than she had felt for many hours, she met her Lord, and assured him that the vision of the gigantic leg and foot was all a fable; and no doubt an impression made by fear, and the dark and dismal hour of the night, on the minds of his servants.

She and the chaplain had examined the chamber, and found every thing in the usual order.

Manfred, though persuaded, like his wife, that the vision had been no work of fancy, recovered a little from the tempest of mind into which so many strange events had thrown him. Ashamed too of his inhuman treatment of a Princess, who returned every injury with new marks of tenderness and duty; he felt returning love forcing itself into his eyes—but not less ashamed of feeling remorse towards one against whom he was inwardly meditating a yet more bitter outrage; he curbed the yearnings of his heart, and did not dare to lean even towards pity. The next transition of his soul was to exquisite villainy. Presuming on the unshaken submission of *Hippolita*, he flattered himself that she would not

only acquiesce with patience to a divorce, but would obey, if it was his pleasure, in endeavouring to persuade *Isabella* to give him her hand—but ere he could indulge his horrid hope, he reflected that *Isabella* was not to be found. Coming to himself, he gave orders that every avenue to the castle should be strictly guarded, and charged his domestics on pain of their lives to suffer nobody to pass out. The young peasant, to whom he spoke favourably, he ordered to remain in a small chamber on the stairs, in which there was a pallet-bed, and the key of which he took away himself, telling the youth he would talk with him in the morning. Then dismissing his attendants, and bestowing a sullen kind of half-nod on *Hippolita*, he retired to his own chamber.

CHAPTER II.

MATILDA, who by *Hippolita*'s order had retired to her apartment, was ill-disposed to take any rest. The shocking fate of her brother had deeply affected her. She was surprized at not seeing *Isabella:* But the strange words which had fallen from her father, and his obscure menace to the Princess his wife, accompanied by the most furious behaviour, had filled her gentle mind with terror and alarm. She waited anxiously for the return of *Bianca*, a young damsel that attended her, whom she had sent to learn what was become of *Isabella*. *Bianca* soon appeared, and informed her mistress of what she had

gathered from the servants, that *Isabella* was no where to be found. She related the adventure of the young peasant, who had been discovered in the vault, tho' with many simple additions from the incoherent accounts of the domestics; and she dwelled principally on the gigantic leg and foot which had been seen in the gallery-chamber. This last circumstance had terrified *Bianca* so much, that she was rejoiced when *Matilda* told her that she would not go to rest, but would watch till the Princess should rise.

The young Princess wearied herself in conjectures on the flight of *Isabella*, and on the threats of *Manfred* to her mother. But what business could he have so urgent with the chaplain? said *Matilda*. Does he intend to have my brother's body interred privately in the chapel? Oh! Madam, said *Bian-*

ca, now I guess. As you are become his heiress, he is impatient to have you married: He has always been raving for more sons; I warrant he is now impatient for grandsons. As sure as I live, Madam, I shall see you a bride at last —good Madam, you won't cast off your faithful *Bianca:* You won't put *Donna Rosara* over me, now you are a great Princess. My poor *Bianca*, said *Matilda*, how fast your thoughts amble! I a great Princess! What hast thou seen in *Manfred*'s behaviour since my brother's death that bespeaks any increase of tenderness to me? No, *Bianca;* his heart was ever a stranger to me—but he is my father, and I must not complain. Nay, if heaven shuts my father's heart against me, it over-pays my little merit in the tenderness of my mother ——O that dear mother! yes, *Bianca*, 'tis there I feel the rugged temper of

Manfred. I can support his harshness to me with patience; but it wounds my soul when I am witness to his causeless severity towards her. Oh! Madam, said *Bianca*, all men use their wives so, when they are weary of them—And yet you congratulated me but now, said *Matilda*, when you fancied my father intended to dispose of me. I would have you a great Lady, replied *Bianca*, come what will. I do not wish to see you moped in a convent, as you would be if you had your will, and if my Lady, your mother, who knows that a bad husband is better than no husband at all, did not hinder you—bless me! what noise is that! St. *Nicholas* forgive me! I was but in jest. It is the wind, said *Matilda*, whistling through the battlements in the tower above: You have heard it a thousand times. Nay, said *Bianca*, there was

no harm neither in what I said: It is no sin to talk of matrimony——and so, Madam, as I was saying; if my Lord *Manfred* should offer you a handsome young Prince for a bridegroom, you would drop him a curtsy, and tell him you would rather take the veil. Thank heaven! I am in no such danger, said *Matilda:* You know how many proposals for me he has rejected——And you thank him, like a dutiful daughter, do you, Madam?——but come, Madam; suppose, to-morrow morning he was to send for you to the great council chamber, and there you should find at his elbow a lovely young Prince, with large black eyes, a smooth white forehead, and manly curling locks like jet; in short, Madam, a young Hero resembling the picture of the good *Alfonso* in the gallery, which you sit and gaze at for hours together—Do not

speak lightly of that picture, interrupted *Matilda* sighing: I know the adoration with which I look at that picture is uncommon—but I am not in love with a coloured pannel. The character of that virtuous Prince, the veneration with which my mother has inspired me for his memory, the orisons which I know not why she has enjoined me to pour forth at his tomb, all have concurred to persuade me that some how or other my destiny is linked with something relating to him—Lord! Madam, how should that be? said *Bianca:* I have always heard that your family was no way related to his: And I am sure I cannot conceive why my Lady, the Princess, sends you in a cold morning or a damp evening to pray at his tomb: He is no Saint by the *Almanack*. If you must pray, why does she not bid you address yourself to our great

St. *Nicholas?* I am sure he is the Saint I pray to for a husband. Perhaps my mind would be less affected, said *Matilda*, if my mother would explain her reasons to me: But it is the mystery she observes, that inspires me with this—I know not what to call it. As she never acts from caprice, I am sure there is some fatal secret at bottom—nay, I know there is: In her agony of grief for my brother's death she dropped some words that intimated as much —Oh! dear Madam, cried *Bianca*, What were they? No; said *Matilda*, if a parent lets fall a word, and wishes it recalled, it is not for a child to utter it. What! was she sorry for what she had said? asked *Bianca*.—I am sure, Madam, you may trust me—With my own little secrets, when I have any, I may; said *Matilda*; but never with my mother's: A child ought to have no ears

or eyes, but as a parent directs. Well! to be sure, Madam, you was born to be a saint, said *Bianca*, and there is no resisting one's vocation: You will end in a convent at last. But there is my Lady *Isabella* would not be so reserved to me: She will let me talk to her of young men; and when a handsome cavalier has come to the castle, she has owned to me that she wished your brother *Conrad* resembled him. *Bianca*, said the Princess, I do not allow you to mention my fried disrespectfully. *Isabella* is of a chearful disposition, but her soul is pure as virtue itself. She knows your idle babling humour, and perhaps has now and then encouraged it, to divert melancholy, and enliven the solitude in which my father keeps us——Blessed *Mary!* said *Bianca* starting, there it is again!—dear Madam, do you hear nothing?——

this castle is certainly haunted!—Peace! said *Matilda*, and listen! I did think I heard a voice—but it must be fancy; your terrors, I suppose, have infected me. Indeed! indeed! Madam, said *Bianca*, half-weeping with agony, I am sure I heard a voice. Does any body lie in the chamber beneath? said the Princess. Nobody has dared to lie there, answered *Bianca*, since the great astrologer that was your brother's tutor, drowned himself. For certain, Madam, his ghost and the young Prince's are now met in the chamber below——for heaven's sake let us fly to your mother's apartment! I charge you not to stir; said *Matilda*. If they are spirits in pain, we may ease their sufferings by questioning them. They can mean no hurt to us, for we have not injured them—and if they should, shall we be more safe in one chamber than in another?

Reach me my beads; we will say a prayer, and then speak to them. Oh! dear Lady, I would not speak to a ghost for the world; cried *Bianca*—as she said those words, they heard the casement of the little chamber below *Matilda*'s open. They listened attentively, and in few minutes thought they heard a person sing, but could not distinguish the words. This can be no evil spirit; said the Princess in a low voice: It is undoubtedly one of the family—open the window, and we shall know the voice. I dare not indeed, Madam; said *Bianca*. Thou art a very fool; said *Matilda*, opening the window gently herself. The noise the Princess made was however heard by the person beneath, who stopped; and they concluded had heard the casement open. Is any body below? said the Princess: If there is, speak. Yes; said an unk-

nown voice. Who is it? said *Matilda*. A stranger; replied the voice. What stranger? said she; and how didst thou come there at this unusual hour, when all the gates of the castle are locked? I am not here willingly; answered the voice——but pardon me, Lady, if I have disturbed your rest: I knew not that I was overheard. Sleep had forsaken me: I left a restless couch, and came to waste the irksome hours with gazing on the fair approach of morning, impatient to be dismissed from this castle. Thy words and accents, said *Matilda*, are of a melancholy cast: If thou art unhappy, I pity thee. If poverty afflicts thee, let me know it: I will mention thee to the Princess, whose beneficent soul ever melts for the distressed; and she will relieve thee. I am indeed unhappy, said the stranger; and I know not what wealth is: But I do not com-

plain of the lot which heaven has cast for me: I am young and healthy, and am not ashamed of owing my support to myself—yet think me not proud, or that I disdain your generous offers. I will remember you in my orisons, and will pray for blessings on your gracious self and your noble mistress—if I sigh, Lady, it is for others, not for myself. Now I have it, Madam; said *Bianca*, whispering the Princess. This is certainly the young peasant; and by my conscience he is in love——Well! this is a charming adventure!—do, Madam, let us sift him. He does not know you, but takes you for one of my Lady *Hippolita*'s women. Art thou not ashamed, *Bianca!* said the Princess: What right have we to pry into the secrets of this young man's heart? he seems virtuous and frank, and tells us he is unhappy: Are those circumstances that authorize

us to make a property of him? how are we intitled to his confidence? Lord! Madam, how little you know of love! replied *Bianca:* Why lovers have no pleasure equal to talking of their mistress. And would you have *me* become a peasant's confident? said the Princess. Well then, let me talk to him; said *Bianca:* Though I have the honour of being your Highness's maid of honour, I was not always so great: Besides, if love levels ranks, it raises them too: I have a respect for any young man in love—Peace! simpleton; said the Princess. Though he said he was unhappy, it does not follow that he must be in love. Think of all that has happened to-day, and tell me if there are no misfortunes but what love causes. Stranger, resumed the Princess, if thy misfortunes have not been occasioned by thy own fault, aud are within the com-

pass of the Princess *Hippolita*'s power to redress, I will take upon me to answer that she will be thy protectress. When thou art dismissed from this castle, repair to holy father *Jerome* at the convent adjoining to the church of St. *Nicholas*, and make thy story known to him, as far as thou thinkest meet: He will not fail to inform the Princess, who is the mother of all that want her assistance. Farewell: It is not seemly for me to hold farther converse with a man at this unwonted hour. May the Saints guard thee, gracious Lady! replied the peasant — but oh! if a poor and worthless stranger might presume to beg a minute's audience farther — am I so happy? — the casement is not shut — might I venture to ask — Speak quickly; said *Matilda*; the morning dawns apace: Should the labourers come into the fields and perceive us —

What wouldst thou ask?—I know not how—I know not if I dare—said the young stranger faltering——yet the humanity with which you have spoken to me emboldens—Lady! dare I trust you?—Heavens! said *Matilda*, What dost thou mean? with what wouldst thou trust me?—speak boldly, if thy secret is fit to be entrusted to a virtuous breast——I would ask, said the peasant, recollecting himself, whether what I have heard from the domestics is true, that the Princess is missing from the castle? What imports it to thee to know? replied *Matilda*. Thy first words bespoke a prudent and becoming gravity. Dost thou come hither to pry into the secrets of *Manfred?*—Adieu. I have been mistaken in thee. Saying these words, she shut the casement hastily, without giving the young man time to reply. I had acted more

wisely, said the Princess to *Bianca* with some sharpness, if I had let thee converse with this peasant: His inquisitiveness seems of a piece with thy own. It is not fit for me to argue with your Highness, replied *Bianca;* but perhaps the questions I should have put to him, would have been more to the purpose, than those you have been pleased to ask him. Oh! no doubt; said *Matilda;* you are a very discreet personage! may I know what *you* would have asked him? A by-stander often sees more of the game than those that play; answered *Bianca*. Does your Highness think, Madam, that his question about my Lady *Isabella* was the result of mere curiosity? No, no, Madam; there is more in it than you great folks are aware of. *Lopez* told me that all the servants believe this young fellow contrived my Lady *Isabella*'s esca-

pe—now, pray, Madam, observe—— you and I both know that my Lady *Isabella* never much fancied the Prince your brother——Well! he is killed just in the critical minute—I accuse nobody. A helmet falls from the moon—so, my Lord, your father says; but *Lopez* and all the servants say that this young spark is a magician, and stole it from *Alfonso*'s tomb—Have done with this rhapsody of impertinence, said *Matilda*. Nay, Madam, as you please; cried *Bianca*—yet it is very particular tho', that my Lady *Isabella* should be missing the very same day, and that this young sorcerer should be found at the mouth of the trap-door—I accuse nobody——but if my young Lord came honestly by his death—Dare not on thy duty, said *Matilda*, to breathe a suspicion on the purity of my dear *Isabella*'s fame——Purity, or not purity,

said *Bianca*, gone she is—a stranger is found that nobody knows: You question him yourself: He tells you he is in love, or unhappy, it is the same thing—nay, he owned he was unhappy about others; and is any body unhappy about another, unless they are in love with them? and at the very next word, he asks innocently, poor soul! if my Lady *Isabella* is missing—To be sure, said *Matilda*, thy observations are not totally without foundation—*Isabella*'s flight amazes me: The curiosity of this stranger is very particular—yet *Isabella* never concealed a thought from me—So she told you, said *Bianca*, to fish out your secrets—but who knows, Madam, but this stranger may be some Prince in disguise?—do, Madam, let me open the window, and ask him a few questions. No, replied *Matilda*, I will ask him myself, if he

knows aught of *Isabella*: He is not worthy that I should converse farther with him. She was going to open the casement, when they heard the bell ring at the postern-gate of the castle, which is on the right hand of the tower, where *Matilda* lay. This prevented the Princess from renewing the conversation with the stranger.

After continuing silent for some time; I am persuaded, said she to *Bianca*, that whatever be the cause of *Isabella*'s flight, it had no unworthy motive. If this stranger was accessary to it, she must be satisfied of his fidelity and worth. I observed, did not you, *Bianca?* that his words were tinctured with an uncommon infusion of piety. It was no ruffian's speech: His phrases were becoming a man of gentle birth. I told you, Madam, said *Bianca*, that I was sure he was some Prince in dis-

guise—Yet, said *Matilda*, if he was privy to her escape, how will you account for his not accompanying her in her flight? why expose himself unnecessarily and rashly to my Father's resentment? As for that, Madam, replied she, if he could get from under the helmet, he will find ways of eluding your Father's anger. I do not doubt but he has some talisman or other about him —You resolve every thing into magic; said *Matilda*—but a man who has any intercourse with infernal spirits, does not dare to make use of those tremendous and holy words, which he uttered. Didst thou not observe with what fervour he vowed to remember *me* to heaven in his prayers?—yes; *Isabella* was undoubtedly convinced of his piety. Commend me to the piety of a young fellow and a damsel that consult to elope! said *Bianca*. No, no,

Madam; my Lady *Isabella* is of another guess mould than you take her for. She used indeed to sigh and lift up her eyes in your company, because she knows you are a Saint—but when your back was turned—You wrong her; said *Matilda: Isabella* is no hypocrite: She has a due sense of devotion, but never affected a call she has not. On the contrary, she always combated my inclination for the cloyster: And though I own the mystery she has made to me of her flight, confounds me; though it seems inconsistent with the friendship between us; I cannot forget the disinterested warmth with which she always opposed my taking the veil: She wished to see me married though my dower would have been a loss to her and my brother's children. For her sake I will believe well of this young peasant. Then you do think there is

some liking between them; said *Bianca*—While she was speaking, a servant came hastily into the chamber and told the Princess, that the Lady *Isabella* was found. Where? said *Matilda*. She has taken sanctuary in St. *Nicholas*'s church; replied the servant: Father *Jerome* has brought the news himself: he is below with his Highness. Where is my Mother? said *Matilda*. She is in her own chamber, Madam, and has asked for you.

Manfred had risen at the first dawn of light, and gone to *Hippolita*'s apartment, to inquire if she knew ought of *Isabella*. While he was questioning her, word was brought that *Jerome* demanded to speak with him. *Manfred*, little suspecting the cause of the Friar's arrival, and knowing he was employed by *Hippolita* in her charities, ordered him to be admitted, intending to leave

them together, while he pursued his search after *Isabella*. Is your business with me or the Princess? said *Manfred*. With both. Replied the holy man. The Lady *Isabella*—What of her! interrupted *Manfred* eagerly—Is at St. *Nicholas*'s altar, replied *Jerome*. That is no business of *Hippolita;* said *Manfred* with confusion: let us retire to my chamber, Father; and inform me how she came thither. No; my Lord; replied the good man with an air of firmness and authority, that daunted even the resolute *Manfred*, who could not help revering the saint-like virtues of *Jerome:* My commission is to both; and with your Highness's goodliking, in the presence of both I shall deliver it —but first, my Lord, I must interrogate the Princess, whether she is acquainted with the cause of the Lady *Isabella*'s retirement from your castle

—No, on my soul; said *Hippolita:* does *Isabella* charge me with being privy to it?—Father, interrupted *Manfred,* I pay due reverence to your holy profession; but I am sovereign here, and will allow no meddling priest to interfere in the affairs of my domestic. If you have ought to say, attend me to my chamber—I do not use to let my Wife be acquainted with the secret affairs of my state; they are not within a woman's province. My Lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions. I forgive your Highness's uncharitable apostrophe: I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than *Manfred*. Hearken to him who speaks through my organs. *Manfred* trembled

with rage and shame. *Hippolita*'s countenance declared her astonishment and impatience to know where this would end: her silence more strongly spoke her observance of *Manfred*.

The Lady *Isabella*, resumed *Jerome*, commends herself to both your Highnesses; she thanks both for the kindness with which she has been treated in your castle: She deplores the loss of your son, and her own misfortune in not becoming the daughter of such wise and noble Princes, whom she shall always respect as *Parents;* she prays for uninterrupted union and felicity between you: (*Manfred*'s colour changed) but as it is no longer possible for her to be allied to you, she entreats your consent to remain in sanctuary, till she can learn news of her father, or, by the certainty of his death, be at liberty, with the approbation of

her guardians, to dispose of herself in suitable marriage. I shall give no such consent; said the Prince; but insist on her return to the castle without delay: I am answerable for her person to her guardians, and will not brook her being in any hands but my own. Your Highness will recollect whether that can any longer be proper; replied the Friar. I want no monitor, said *Manfred* colouring; *Isabella*'s conduct leaves room for strange suspicions — and that young villain, who was at least the accomplice of her flight, if not the cause of it — The cause! interrupted *Jerome;* was a *young* man the cause! This is not to be borne! cried *Manfred*. Am I to be bearded in my own palace by an insolent Monk! thou art privy I guess, to their amours. I would pray to heaven to clear up your uncharitable surmizes, said *Jerome*, if your Highness

were not satisfied in your conscience how unjustly you accuse me. I do pray to heaven to pardon that uncharitableness: And I implore your Highness to leave the Princess at peace in that holy place, where she is not liable to be disturbed by such vain and worldly fantasies as discourses of love from any man. Cant not to me, said *Manfred*, but return and bring the Princess to her duty. It is my duty to prevent her return hither; said *Jerome*. She is where orphans and virgins are safest from the snares and wiles of this world; and nothing but a parent's authority shall take her thence. I am her parent, cried *Manfred*, and demand her. She wished to have you for her parent; said the Friar: But heaven that forbad that connection, has for ever dissolved all ties betwixt you: And I announce to your Highness — Stop! audacious man,

said *Manfred*, and dread my displeasure. Holy father, said *Hippolita*, it is your office to be no respecter of persons: you must speak as your duty prescribes: But it is my duty to hear nothing that it pleases not my Lord I should hear. Attend the Prince to his chamber. I will retire to my oratory, and pray to the blessed virgin to inspire you with her holy councils, and to restore the heart of my gracious Lord to its wonted peace and gentleness. Excellent woman! said the Friar—my Lord, I attend your pleasure.

Manfred, accompanied by the Friar, passed to his own apartment, where shutting the door, I perceive, father, said he, that *Isabella* has acquainted you with my purpose. Now hear my resolve, and obey. Reasons of state, most urgent reasons, my own and the safety of my people, demand that I

should have a son. It is in vain to expect an heir from *Hippolita*. I have made choice of *Isabella*. You must bring her back; and you must do more. I know the influence you have with *Hippolita:* her conscience is in your hands. She is, I allow, a faultless woman: Her soul is set on heaven, and scorns the little grandeur of this world: you can withdraw her from it intirely. Persuade her to consent to the dissolution of our marriage, and to retire into a monastery—she shall endow one if she will; and she shall have the means of being as liberal to your order as she or you can wish. Thus you will divert the calamities that are hanging over our heads, and have the merit of saving the principality of *Otranto* from destruction. You are a prudent man, and though the warmth of my temper betrayed me into some unbecoming ex-

pressions, I honour your virtue, and wish to be indebted to you for the repose of my life and the preservation of my family.

The will of heaven be done! said the Friar. I am but its worthless instrument. It makes use of my tongue, to tell thee, Prince, of thy unwarantable designs. The injuries of the virtuous *Hippolita* have mounted to the throne of pity. By me thou art reprimanded for thy adulterous intention of repudiating her: By me thou art warned not to pursue the incestuous design on thy contracted daughter. Heaven that delivered her from thy fury, when the judgments so recently fallen on thy house ought to have inspired thee with other thoughts, will continue to watch over her. Even I, a poor and despised Friar, am able to protect her from thy violence—I, sinner as I am, and un-

charitably reviled by your Highness as an accomplice of I know not what amours, scorn the allurements with which it has pleased thee to tempt mine honesty. I love my order; I honour devout souls; I respect the piety of thy Princess—but I will not betray the confidence she reposes in me, nor serve even the cause of religion by foul and sinful compliances—but forsooth! the welfare of the state depends on your Highness having a son. Heaven mocks the short-sighted views of man. But yester-morn, whose house was so great, so flourishing as *Manfred*'s?—where is young *Conrad* now!—my Lord, I respect your tears—but I mean not to check them—let them flow, Prince! they will weigh more with heaven toward the welfare of thy subjects, than a marriage, which, founded on lust or policy, could never prosper. The sce-

pter, which passed from the race of *Alfonso* to thine, cannot be preserved by a match which the church will never allow. If it is the will of the most High that *Manfred*'s name must perish, resign yourself, my Lord, to its decrees; and thus deserve a crown that can never pass away.—Come, my Lord; I like this sorrow — let us return to the Princess: She is not apprized of your cruel intentions; nor did I mean more than to alarm you. You saw with what gentle patience, with what efforts of love, she heard, she rejected hearing the extent of your guilt. I know she longs to fold you in her arms, and assure you of her unalterable affection. Father, said the Prince, you mistake my compunction: true; I honour *Hippolita*'s virtues; I think her a Saint; and wish it were for my soul's health to tie faster the knot that has united us—but alas!

Father, you know not the bitterest of my pangs! it is some time that I have had scruples on the legality of our union: *Hippolita* is related to me in the fourth degree—it is true, we had a dispensation: But I have been informed that she had also been contracted to another. This it is that sits heavy at my heart: To this state of unlawful wedlock I impute the visitation that has fallen on me in the death of *Conrad!*—ease my conscience of this burden: dissolve our marriage, and accomplish the work of godliness which your divine exhortations have commenced in my soul.

How cutting was the anguish which the good man felt, when he perceived this turn in the wily Prince! He trembled for *Hippolita*, whose ruin he saw was determined; and he feared if *Manfred* had no hope of recovering *Isabel-*

la, that his impatience for a son would direct him to some other object, who might not be equally proof against the temptation of *Manfred*'s rank. For some time the holy man remained absorbed in thought. At length, conceiving some hopes from delay, he thought the wisest conduct would be to prevent the Prince from despairing of recovering *Isabella*. Her the Friar knew he could dispose, from her affection to *Hippolita*, and from the aversion she had expressed to him for *Manfred*'s addresses, to second his views, till the censures of the church could be fulminated against a divorce. With this intention, as if struck with the Prince's scruples, he at length said; My Lord, I have been pondering on what your Highness has said; and if in truth it is delicacy of conscience that is the real motive of your repugnance to your virtuous Lady, far be it from me to

endeavour to harden your heart. The church is an indulgent mother: unfold your griefs to her: she alone can administer comfort to your soul, either by satisfying your conscience, or upon examination of your scruples, by setting you at liberty, and indulging you in the lawful means of continuing your lineage. In the latter case, if the Lady *Isabella* can be brought to consent——*Manfred*, who concluded that he had either over-reached the good man, or that his first warmth had been but a tribute paid to appearance, was overjoyed at his sudden turn, and repeated the most magnificent promises, if he should succeed by the Friar's mediation. The well-meaning Priest suffered him to deceive himself, fully determined to traverse his views, instead of seconding them.

Since we now understand one another, resumed the Prince, I expect,

Father, that you satisfy me in one point. Who is the youth that I found in the vault? He must have been privy to *Isabella*'s flight: Tell me truly; is he her lover? or is he an agent for another's passion? I have often suspected *Isabella*'s indifference to my son: a thousand circumstances croud on my mind that confirm that suspicion. She herself was so conscious of it, that while I discoursed her in the gallery, she outran my suspicions, and endeavoured to justify herself from coolness to *Conrad*. The Friar, who knew nothing of the youth, but what he had learnt occasionally from the Princess, ignorant what was become of him, and not sufficiently reflecting on the impetuosity of *Manfred*'s temper, conceived that it might not be amiss to sow the seeds of jealousy in his mind: they might be turned to some use hereafter, either by

prejudicing the Prince against *Isabella*, if he persisted in that union; or by diverting his attention to a wrong scent, and employing his thoughts on a visionary intrigue, prevent his engaging in any new pursuit. With this unhappy policy, he answered in a manner to confirm *Manfred* in the belief of some connection between *Isabella* and the youth. The Prince, whose passions wanted little fuel to throw them into a blaze, fell into a rage at the idea of what the Friar suggested. I will fathom to the bottom of this intrigue; cried he; and quitting *Jerome* abruptly, with a command to remain there till his return, he hastened to the great hall of the castle, and ordered the peasant to be brought before him.

Thou hardened young impostor! said the Prince, as soon as he saw the youth; what becomes of thy boasted veracity

now? it was Providence, was it, and the light of the moon, that discovered the lock of the trap-door to thee? Tell me, audacious boy, who thou art, and how long thou hast been acquainted with the Princess——and take care to answer with less equivocation than thou didst last night, or tortures shall wring the truth from thee. The young man, perceiving that his share in the flight of the Princess was discovered, and concluding that any thing he should say could no longer be of service or detriment to her, replied, I am no impostor, my Lord, nor have I deserved opprobrious language. I answered to every question your Highness put to me last night with the same veracity that I shall speak now: And that will not be from fear of your tortures, but because my soul abhors a falshood. Please to repeat your questions, my

Lord; I am ready to give you all the satisfaction in my power. You know my questions, replied the Prince, and only want time to prepare an evasion. Speak directly; who art thou? and how long hast thou been known to the Princess? I am a labourer at the next village; said the peasant; my name is *Theodore*. The Princess found me in the vault last night: Before that hour I never was in her presence. I may believe as much or as little as I please of this, said *Manfred;* but I will hear thy own story, before I examine into the truth of it. Tell me, what reason did the Princess give thee for making her escape? thy life depends on thy answer. She told me, replied *Theodore*, that she was on the brink of destruction, and that if she could not escape from the castle, she was in danger in a few moments of being made miserable for

ever. And on this slight foundation, on a silly girl's report, said *Manfred*, thou didst hazard my displeasure! I fear no man's displeasure, said *Theodore*, when a woman in distress puts herself under my protection—During this examination, *Matilda* was going to the apartment of *Hippolita*. At the upper end of the hall, where *Manfred* sat, was a boarded gallery with latticed windows, thro'which *Matilda* and *Bianca* were to pass. Hearing her father's voice, and seeing the servants assembled round him, she stopped to learn the occasion. The prisoner soon drew her attention. The steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly, interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome, and commanding, even in that situation: But his counte-

nance soon engrossed her whole care. Heavens! *Bianca*, said the Princess softly, do I dream? or is not that youth the exact resemblance of *Alfonso*'s picture in the gallery? She could say no more, for her father's voice grew louder at every word. This bravado, said he, surpasses all thy former insolence. Thou shalt experience the wrath with which thou darest to trifle. Seize him, continued *Manfred*, and bind him— the first news the Princess hears of her champion shall be, that he has lost his head for her sake. The injustice of which thou art guilty towards me, said *Theodore*, convinces me that I have done a good deed in delivering the Princess from thy tyranny. May she be happy, whatever becomes of me! This is a Lover! cried *Manfred* in a rage: A peasant within sight of death is not animated by such sentiments.

Tell me, tell me, rash boy, who thou art, or the rack shall force thy secret from thee. Thou hast threatened me with death already, said the youth, for the truth I have told thee: If that is all the encouragement I am to expect for sincerity, I am not tempted to indulge thy vain curiosity farther. Then thou wilt not speak! said *Manfred*. I will not; replied he. Bear him away into the court-yard; said *Manfred;* I will see his head this instant severed from his body — *Matilda* fainted at hearing those words. *Bianca* shrieked, and cried, Help! help! the Princess is dead! *Manfred* started at this ejaculation, and demanded what was the matter! The young peasant, who heard it too, was struck with horror, and asked eagerly the same question; but *Manfred* ordered him to be hurried into the court, and kept there for execution,

till he had informed himself of the cause of *Bianca*'s shrieks. When he learned the meaning, he treated it as a womanish panic, and ordering *Matilda* to be carried to her apartment, he rushed into the court, and calling for one of his guards, bad *Theodore* kneel down, and prepare to receive the fatal blow.

The undaunted youth received the bitter sentence with a resignation that touched every heart but *Manfred*'s. He wished earnestly to know the meaning of the words he had heard relating to the Princess; but fearing to exasperate the tyrant more against her, he desisted. The only boon he deigned to ask, was, that he might be permitted to have a confessor, and make his peace with heaven. *Manfred*, who hoped by the confessor's means to come at the youth's history, readily granted his re-

quest: and being convinced that Father *Jerome* was now in his interest, he ordered him to be called and shrieve the prisoner. The holy man, who had little foreseen the catastrophe that his imprudence occasioned, fell on his knees to the Prince, and adjured him in the most solemn manner not to shed innocent blood. He accused himself in the bitterest terms for his indiscretion, endeavoured to disculpate the youth, and left no method untried to soften the tyrant's rage. *Manfred*, more incensed than appeased by *Jerome*'s intercession, whose retraction now made him suspect he had been imposed upon by both, commanded the Friar to do his duty, telling him he would not allow the prisoner many minutes for confession. Nor do I ask many, my Lord; said the unhappy young man. My sins, thank heaven! have not been numerous;

nor exceed what might be expected at my years. Dry your tears, good father, and let us dispatch: This is a bad world; nor have I had cause to leave it with regret. Oh! wretched youth! said *Jerome;* how canst thou bear the sight of me with patience? I am thy murderer! it is I have brought this dismal hour upon thee! I forgive thee from my soul, said the youth, as I hope heaven will pardon me. Hear my confession, father; and give me thy blessing. How can I prepare thee for thy passage, as I ought? said *Jerome*. Thou canst not be saved without pardoning thy foes —and canst thou forgive that impious man there! I can; said *Theodore;* I do. —And does not this touch thee! cruel Prince! said the Friar.—I sent for thee to confess him, said *Manfred* sternly; not to plead for him. Thou didst first incense me against him—his blood be

upon thy head! It will! it will! said the good man, in an agony of sorrow. Thou and I must never hope to go where this blessed youth is going! Dispatch! said *Manfred:* I am no more to be moved by the whining of priests, than by the shrieks of women. What! said the youth; is it possible that my fate could have occasioned what I heard! is the Princess then again in thy power? Thou dost but remember me of my wrath; said *Manfred:* Prepare thee, for this moment is thy last. The youth, who felt his indignation rise, and who was touched with the sorrow which he saw he had infused into all the spectators, as well as into the Friar, suppressed his emotions, and putting off his doublet, and unbuttoning his collar, knelt down to his prayers. As he stooped, his shirt slipped down below his shoulder, and discovered the

mark of a bloody arrow. Gracious heaven! cried the holy man starting, what do I see! it is my child! my *Theodore!*

The passions that ensued, must be conceived; they cannot be painted. The tears of the assistants were suspended by wonder, rather than stopped by joy. They seemed to inquire in the eyes of their Lord what they ought to feel. Surprise, doubt, tenderness, respect, succeeded each other in the countenance of the youth. He received with modest submission the effusion of the old man's tears and embraces: Yet afraid of giving a loose to hope, and suspecting from what had passed the inflexibility of *Manfred*'s temper, he cast a glance towards the Prince, as if to say, canst thou be unmoved at such a scene as this?

Manfred's heart was capable of being touched. He forgot his anger in his

astonishment; yet his pride forbad his owning himself affected. He even doubted whether this discovery was not a contrivance of the friar to save the youth. What may this mean? said he: How can he be thy son? is it consistent with thy profession or reputed sanctity to avow a peasant's offspring for the fruit of thy irregular amours! Oh! God, said the holy man, dost thou question his being mine? could I feel the anguish I do, if I were not his father? Spare him! good Prince, spare him! and revile me as thou pleasest. Spare him! spare him, cried the attendants, for this good man's sake! Peace! said *Manfred* sternly: I must know more, ere I am disposed to pardon. A Saint's bastard may be no saint himself. Injurious Lord! said *Theodore;* add not insult to cruelty. If I am this venerable man's son, tho' no Prince, as

thou art, know, the blood that flows in my veins—Yes, said the Friar, interrupting him, his blood is noble; nor is he that abject thing, my Lord, you speak him. He is my lawful son; and *Sicily* can boast of few houses more ancient than that of *Falconara*——but alas! my Lord, what is blood! what is nobility! We are all reptiles, miserable, sinful creatures. It is piety alone that can distinguish us from the dust whence we sprung, and whither we must return—Truce to your sermon; said *Manfred:* You forget, you are no longer Friar *Jerome*, but the Count of *Falconara*. Let me know your history: you will have time to moralize hereafter, if you should not happen to obtain the grace of that sturdy criminal there. Mother of God! said the Friar, is it possible my Lord can refuse a father the life of his only, his long-lost child!

Trample me, my Lord, scorn, afflict me, accept my life for his, but spare my son! Thou canst feel then, said *Manfred*, what it is to lose an only son!——a little hour ago thou didst preach up resignation to me: *My* House, if fate so pleased, must perish—but the Count of *Falconara*—Alas! my Lord, said *Jerome*, I confess I have offended; but aggravate not an old man's sufferings! I boast not of my family, nor think of such vanities—it is nature that pleads for this boy; it is the memory of the dear woman that bore him—is she, *Theodore*, is she dead?—Her soul has long been with the blessed; said *Theodore*. Oh! how? cried *Jerome*, tell me—No—she is happy! Thou art all my care now!—most dread Lord! will you——will you grant me my poor boy's life? Return to thy convent; answered *Manfred;*

conduct the Princess hither; obey me in what else thou knowest; and I promise thee the life of thy son.—Oh! my Lord, said *Jerome*, is my honesty the price I must pay for this dear youth's safety—For me! cried *Theodore:* Let me die a thousand deaths, rather than stain thy conscience. What is it the tyrant would exact of thee? is the Princess still safe from his power? protect her, thou venerable old man; and let all the weight of his wrath fall on me. *Jerome* endeavoured to check the impetuosity of the youth; and ere *Manfred* could reply, the trampling of horses was heard, and a brazen trumpet, which hung without the gate of the castle, was suddenly sounded. At the same instant the sable plumes on the enchanted helmet, which still remained at the other end of the court, were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice, as if bowed by some invisible wearer.

CHAPTER III.

MANFRED's heart misgave him when he beheld the plumage on the miraculous casque shaken in concert with the sounding of the brazen trumpet. Father! said he to *Jerome*, whom he now ceased to treat as Count of *Falconara*, what mean these portents? If I have offended—the plumes were shaken with greater violence than before. Unhappy Prince that I am! cried *Manfred*—Holy Father! will you not assist me with your prayers? My Lord, replied *Jerome*, heaven is no doubt displeased with your mockery of its servants. Submit yourself to the church; and cease to persecute her ministers.

Dismiss this innocent youth; and learn to respect the holy character I wear: Heaven will not be trifled with: you see——the trumpet sounded again. I acknowledge I have been too hasty; said *Manfred*. Father, do you go to the wicket, and demand who is at the gate. Do you grant me the life of *Theodore?* replied the Friar. I do; said *Manfred;* but inquire who is without!

Jerome falling on the neck of his son, discharged a flood of tears, that spoke the fulness of his soul. You promised to go to the gate; said *Manfred*. I thought, replied the Friar, your Highness would excuse my thanking you first in this tribute of my heart. Go, dearest Sir, said *Theodore;* obey the Prince: I do not deserve that you should delay his satisfaction for me.

Jerome, inquiring who was without, was answered, a Herald. From whom?

said he. From the Knight of the Gigantic sabre; said the Herald; and I must speak with the usurper of *Otranto*. *Jerome* returned to the Prince, and did not fail to repeat the message in the very words it had been uttered. The first sounds struck *Manfred* with terror; but when he heard himself stiled usurper, his rage rekindled, and all his courage revived. Usurper!—insolent villain! cried he, who dares to question my title? retire, Father; this is no business for Monks: I will meet this presumptuous man myself. Go to your convent and prepare the Princess's return: Your Son shall be a hostage for your fidelity: His life depends on your obedience. Good heaven! my Lord, cried *Jerome*, your Highness did but this instant freely pardon my child—have you so soon forgot the interposition of heaven? Heaven, replied

Manfred, does not send Heralds to question the title of a lawful Prince—I doubt whether it even notifies its will through Friars—but that is your affair, not mine. At present you know my pleasure; and it is not a saucy Herald, that shall save your son, if you do not return with the Princess.

It was in vain for the holy man to reply. *Manfred* commanded him to be conducted to the postern-gate, and shut out from the castle: And he ordered some of his attendants to carry *Theodore* to the top of the black tower, and guard him strictly; scarce permitting the father and son to exchange a hasty embrace at parting. He then withdrew to the hall, and seating himself in princely state, ordered the Herald to be admitted to his presence.

Well! thou insolent! said the Prince, what wouldst thou with me! I

come, replied he, to thee, *Manfred*, usurper of the principality of *Otranto*, from the renowned and invincible Knight, the Knight of the Gigantic sabre: in the name of his Lord, *Frederic* Marquis of *Vicenza*, he demands the Lady *Isabella*, daughter of that Prince, whom thou hast basely and traiterously got into thy power, by bribing her false guardians during his absence: and he requires thee to resign the principality of *Otranto*, which thou hast usurped from the said Lord *Frederic*, the nearest of blood to the last rightful Lord *Alfonso* the Good. If thou dost not instantly comply with these just demands, he defies thee to single combat to the last extremity. And so saying, the Herald cast down his warder.

And where is this braggart, who sends thee? said *Manfred*. At the distance of a league, said the Herald:

he comes to make good his Lord's claim against thee, as he is a true Knight and thou an usurper and ravisher.

Injurious as this challenge was, *Manfred* reflected that it was not his interest to provoke the Marquis. He knew how well-founded the claim of *Frederic* was; nor was this the first time he had heard of it. *Frederic*'s ancestors had assumed the stile of Princes of *Otranto*, from the death of *Alfonso* the Good without issue; but *Manfred*, his father, and grandfather, had been too powerful for the house of *Vicenza* to dispossess them. *Frederic*, a martial and amorous young Prince, had married a beautiful young Lady, of whom he was enamoured, and who had died in childbed of *Isabella*. Her death affected him so much, that he had taken the cross and gone to the holy land, where he was woun-

ded in an engagement against the infidels, made prisoner, and reported to be dead. When the news reached *Manfred*'s ears, he bribed the guardians of the Lady *Isabella* to deliver her up to him as a bride for his son *Conrad*, by which alliance he had proposed to unite the claims of the two houses. This motive, on *Conrad*'s death, had co-operated to make him so suddenly resolve on espousing her himself; and the same reflection determined him now to endeavour at obtaining the consent of *Frederic* to this marriage. A like policy inspired him with the thought of inviting *Frederic*'s champion into his castle, lest he should be informed of *Isabella*'s flight, which he strictly enjoined his domestics not to disclose to any of the Knight's retinue.

Herald, said *Manfred*, as soon as he had digested these reflections, re-

turn to thy master, and tell him, ere we liquidate our differences by the sword, *Manfred* would hold some converse with him. Bid him welcome to my castle, where by my faith, as I am a true Knight, he shall have courteous reception, and full security for himself and followers. If we cannot adjust our quarrel by amicable means, I swear he shall depart in safety, and shall have full satisfaction according to the laws of arms: So help me God and his holy Trinity! the Herald made three obeisances and retired.

During this interview *Jerome*'s mind was agitated by a thousand contrary passions. He trembled for the life of his son, and his first thought was to persuade *Isabella* to return to the castle. Yet he was scarce less alarmed at the thought of her union with *Manfred*. He dreaded *Hippolita*'s unboun-

ded submission to the will of her Lord; and though he did not doubt but he could alarm her piety not to consent to a divorce, if he could get access to her; yet should *Manfred* discover that the obstruction came from him, it might be equally fatal to *Theodore*. He was impatient to know whence came the Herald, who with so little management had questioned the title of *Manfred:* yet he did not dare absent himself from the convent, lest *Isabella* should leave it, and her flight be imputed to him. He returned disconsolately to the monastery, uncertain on what conduct to resolve. A Monk, who met him in the porch and observed his melancholy air, said, Alas! brother, is it then true that we have lost our excellent Princess *Hippolita?* The holy man started, and cried, What meanest thou, brother! I come this instant from the castle, and

left her in perfect health. *Martelli*, replied the other Friar, passed by the convent but a quarter of an hour ago on his way from the castle, and reported that her Highness was dead. All our brethren are gone to the chapel to pray for her happy transit to a better life, and willed me to wait thy arrival. They know thy holy attachment to that good Lady, and are anxious for the affliction it will cause in thee—— indeed we have all reason to weep; she was a mother to our house—but this life is but a pilgrimage; we must not murmur—we shall all follow her! may our end be like her's! Good brother, thou dreamest, said *Jerome:* I tell thee I come from the castle, and left the Princess well—where is the Lady *Isabella?*—Poor Gentlewoman! replied the Friar; I told her the sad news, and offered her spiritual comfort; I re-

minded her of the transitory condition of mortality, and advised her to take the veil: I quoted the example of the holy Princess *Sanchia* of *Arragon* —— Thy zeal was laudable, said *Jerome* impatiently; but at present it was unnecessary: *Hippolita* is well—at least I trust in the Lord she is; I heard nothing to the contrary—yet methinks, the Prince's earnestness—well, brother, but where is the Lady *Isabella?* I know not; said the Friar: She wept much, and said she would retire to her chamber. *Jerome* left his comrade abruptly, and hastened to the Princess, but she was not in her chamber. He enquired of the domestics of the convent, but could learn no news of her. He searched in vain throughout the monastery and the church, and dispatched messengers round the neighbourhood, to get intelligence if she had

been seen; but to no purpose. Nothing could equal the good man's perplexity. He judged that *Isabella*, suspecting *Manfred* of having precipitated his wife's death, had taken the alarm, and withdrawn herself to some more secret place of concealment. This new flight would probably carry the Prince's fury to the height. The report of *Hippolita*'s death, though it seemed almost incredible, increased his consternation; and though *Isabella*'s escape bespoke her aversion of *Manfred* for a husband, *Jerome* could feel no comfort from it, while it endangered the life of his son. He determined to return to the castle, and made several of his brethren accompany him to attest his innocence to *Manfred*, and, if necessary, join their intercession with his for *Theodore*.

The Prince, in the mean time, had passed into the court, and ordered the

gates of the castle to be flung open for the reception of the stranger Knight and his train. In a few minutes the cavalcade arrived. First came two harbingers with wands. Next a herald, followed by two pages and two trumpets. Then an hundred foot-guards. These were attended by as many horse. After them fifty footmen, cloathed in scarlet and black, the colours of the Knight. Then a led horse. Two heralds on each side of a gentleman on horseback bearing a banner with the arms of *Vicenza* and *Otranto* quarterly — a circumstance that much offended *Manfred* — but he stifled his resentment. Two more pages. The Knight's confessor telling his beads. Fifty more footmen clad as before. Two Knights habited in complete armour, their beavers down, comrades to the principal Knight. The squires of the two Knights, car-

rying their shields and devices. The Knight's own squire. An hundred gentlemen bearing an enormous sword, and seeming to faint under the weight of it. The Knight himself on a chesnut steed, in complete armour, his lance in the rest, his face entirely concealed by his vizor, which was surmounted by a large plume of scarlet and black feathers. Fifty foot-guards with drums and trumpets closed the procession, which wheeled off to the right and left to make room for the principal Knight.

As soon as he approached the gate, he stopped; and the herald advancing, read again the words of the challenge. *Manfred*'s eyes were fixed on the gigantic sword, and he scarce seemed to attend to the cartel: But his attention was soon diverted by a tempest of wind that rose behind him. He turned and beheld the plumes of the enchanted

helmet agitated in the same extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like *Manfred*'s not to sink under a concurrence of circumstances that seemed to announce his fate. Yet scorning in the presence of strangers to betray the courage he had always manifested, he said boldly, Sir Knight, whoever thou art I bid thee welcome. If thou art of mortal mould, thy valour shall meet its equal: And if thou art a true Knight, thou wilt scorn to employ sorcery to carry thy point. Be these omens from heaven or hell, *Manfred* trusts to the righteousness of his cause and to the aid of St. *Nicholas*, who has ever protected his house. Alight, Sir Knight, and repose thyself. Tomorrow thou shalt have a fair field; and heaven befriend the juster side!

The Knight made no reply, but dismounting, was conducted by *Man-*

fred to the great hall of the castle. As they traversed the court, the Knight stopped to gaze on the miraculous casque; and kneeling down, seemed to pray inwardly for some minutes. Rising, he made a sign to the Prince to lead on. As soon as they entered the hall, *Manfred* proposed to the stranger to disarm, but the Knight shook his head in token of refusal. Sir Knight, said *Manfred*, this is not courteous; but by my good faith I will not cross thee; nor shalt thou have cause to complain of the Prince of *Otranto*. No treachery is designed on my part; I hope none is intended on thine; here, take my gage: (giving him his ring) your friends and you shall enjoy the laws of hospitality. Rest here, until refreshments are brought: I will but give orders for the accommodation of your train, and return to you. The

three Knights bowed as accepting his courtesy. *Manfred* directed the stranger's retinue to be conducted to an adjacent hospital, founded by the Princess *Hippolita* for the reception of pilgrims. As they made the circuit of the court to return towards the gate, the gigantic sword burst from the supporters, and falling to the ground opposite to the helmet, remained immoveable. *Manfred*, almost hardened to preternatural appearances, surmounted the shock of this new prodigy; and returning to the hall, where by this time the feast was ready, he invited his silent guests to take their places. *Manfred*, however ill his heart was at ease, endeavoured to inspire the company with mirth. He put several questions to them, but was answered only by signs. They raised their vizors but sufficiently to feed themselves, and that

sparingly. Sirs, said the Prince, ye are the first guests I ever treated within these walls, who scorned to hold any intercourse with me: Nor has it oft been customary, I ween, for princes to hazard their state and dignity against strangers and mutes. You say you come in the name of *Frederic* of *Vicenza;* I have ever heard that he was a gallant and courteous Knight; nor would he, I am bold to say, think it beneath him to mix in social converse with a Prince that is his equal, and not unknown by deeds in arms—Still ye are silent—well! be it as it may——by the laws of hospitality and chivalry ye are masters under this roof: Ye shall do your pleasure—but come, give me a goblet of wine; ye will not refuse to pledge me to the healths of your fair mistresses. The principal Knight sighed and crossed himself, and was rising

from the board — Sir Knight, said *Manfred*, what I said was but in sport: I shall constrain you in nothing: Use your good liking. Since mirth is not your mood, let us be sad. Business may hit your fancies better: Let us withdraw; and hear if what I have to unfold, may be better relished than the vain efforts I have made for your pastime.

Manfred then conducting the three Knights into an inner chamber, shut the door, and inviting them to be seated, began thus, addressing himself to the chief personage.

You come, Sir Knight, as I understand, in the name of the Marquis of *Vicenza*, to redemand the Lady *Isabella* his daughter, who has been contracted in the face of holy church to my son, by the consent of her legal guardians; and to require me to resign

my dominions to your Lord, who gives himself for the nearest of blood to Prince *Alfonso*, whose soul God rest! I shall speak to the latter article of your demands first. You must know, your Lord knows, that I enjoy the principality of *Otranto* from my father *Don Manuel*, as he received it from his father *Don Ricardo*. *Alfonso*, their predecessor, dying childless in the Holy Land, bequeathed his estates to my grandfather *Don Ricardo*, in consideration of his faithful services——the stranger shook his head—Sir Knight, said *Manfred* warmly, *Ricardo* was a valiant and upright man; he was a pious man; witness his munificent foundation of the adjoining church and two convents. He was peculiarly patronized by St. *Nicholas*—my grandfather was incapable—I say, Sir, *Don Ricardo* was incapable—excuse me, your interrup-

tion has disordered me.—I venerate the memory of my grandfather—well! Sirs, he held this estate; he held it by his good sword and by the favour of St. *Nicholas*—so did my father; and so, Sirs, will I, come what come will—but *Frederic*, your Lord, is nearest in blood—I have consented to put my title to the issue of the sword—does that imply a vitious title?—I might have asked, where is *Frederic* your Lord? Report speaks him dead in captivity. You say, your actions say, he lives—I question it not—I might, Sirs, I might—but I do not. Other Princes would bid *Frederic* take his inheritance by force, if he can: They would not stake their dignity on a single combat: They would not submit it to the decision of unknown mutes!—pardon me, Gentlemen, I am too warm: But suppose yourselves in my situa-

tion: As ye are stout Knights, would it not move your choler to have your own and the honour of your ancestors called in question?—but to the point. Ye require me to deliver up the Lady *Isabella*——Sirs, I must ask if ye are authorized to receive her? The Knight nodded. Receive her—continued *Manfred;* well! you are authorized to receive her——but, gentle Knight, may I ask if you have full powers? The Knight nodded. 'Tis well; said *Manfred:* Then hear what I have to offer —ye see, Gentlemen, before you the most unhappy of men! (he began to weep) afford me your compassion; I am intitled to it: Indeed I am. Know, I have lost my only hope, my joy, the support of my house——*Conrad* died yester morning. The Knights discovered signs of surprise. Yes, Sirs, fate has disposed of my son. *Isabella* is at

liberty——Do you then restore her? cried the chief Knight, breaking silence. Afford me your patience: said *Manfred*. I rejoice to find, by this testimony of your good-will, that this matter may be adjusted without blood. It is no interest of mine dictates what little I have farther to say. Ye behold in me a man disgusted with the world: The loss of my son has weaned me from earthly cares. Power and greatness have no longer any charms in my eyes. I wished to transmit the scepter I had received from my ancestors with honour to my son—but that is over! Life itself is so indifferent to me, that I accepted your defiance with joy: A good Knight cannot go to the grave with more satisfaction than when falling in his vocation. Whatever is the will of heaven, I submit; for alas! Sirs, I am a man of many sorrows.

Manfred is no object of envy——but no doubt you are acquainted with my story. The Knight made signs of ignorance, and seemed curious to have *Manfred* proceed. Is it possible, Sirs, continued the Prince, that my story should be a secret to you? have you heard nothing relating to me and the Princess *Hippolita?* They shook their heads!—No! thus then, Sirs, it is. You think me ambitious: Ambition, alas! is composed of more rugged materials. If I were ambitious, I should not for so many years have been a prey to all the hell of conscientious scruples —but I weary your patience: I will be brief. Know then, that I have long been troubled in mind on my union with the Princess *Hippolita*.——Oh! Sirs, if ye were acquainted with that excellent woman! if ye knew that I adore her like a mistress, and cherish

her as a friend—but man was not born for perfect happiness! she shares my scruples, and with her consent I have brought this matter before the church, for we are related within the forbidden degrees. I expect every hour the definitive sentence that must separate us for ever——I am sure you feel for me——I see you do——pardon these tears! The Knights gazed on each other, wondering where this would end. *Manfred* continued. The death of my son betiding while my soul was under this anxiety, I thought of nothing but resigning my dominions, and retiring for ever from the sight of mankind. My only difficulty was to fix on a successor, who would be tender of my people, and to dispose of the Lady *Isabella*, who is dear to me as my own blood. I was willing to restore the line of *Alfonso*, even in his

most distant kindred: And though, pardon me, I am satisfied it was his will that *Ricardo*'s lineage should take place of his own relations; yet where was I to search for those relations? I knew of none but *Frederic* your Lord; he was a captive to the infidels, or dead; and were he living, and at home, would he quit the flourishing state of *Vicenza* for the inconsiderable principality of *Otranto?* If he would not, could I bear the thought of seeing a hard unfeeling Viceroy set over my poor faithful people?——for, Sirs, I love my people, and thank heaven am beloved by them——but ye will ask, whither tends this long discourse? briefly then, thus, Sirs. Heaven in your arrival seems to point out a remedy for these difficulties and my misfortunes. The Lady *Isabella* is at liberty; I shall soon be so—I would submit to any

thing for the good of my people—were it not the best, the only way to extinguish the feuds between our families, if I was to take the Lady *Isabella* to wife—you start—but though *Hippolita*'s virtues will ever be dear to me, a Prince must not consider himself; he is born for his people.—A servant at that instant entering the chamber apprized *Manfred* that *Jerome* and several of his brethren demanded immediate access to him.

The Prince, provoked at this interruption, and fearing that the Friar would discover to the strangers that *Isabella* had taken sanctuary, was going to forbid *Jerome*'s entrance. But recollecting that he was certainly arrived to notify the Princess's return, *Manfred* began to excuse himself to the Knights for leaving them for a few moments, but was prevented by the arri-

val of the Friars. *Manfred* angrily reprimanded them for their intrusion, and would have forced them back from the chamber; but *Jerome* was too much agitated to be repulsed. He declared aloud the flight of *Isabella*, with protestations of his own innocence. *Manfred* distracted at the news, and not less at its coming to the knowledge of the strangers, uttered nothing but incoherent sentences, now upbraiding the Friar, now apologizing to the Knights, earnest to know what was become of *Isabella*, yet equally afraid of their knowing, impatient to pursue her, yet dreading to have them join in the pursuit. He offered to dispatch messengers in quest of her,—but the chief Knight no longer keeping silence, reproached *Manfred* in bitter terms for his dark and ambiguous dealing, and demanded the cause of *Isabella*'s first

absence from the castle. *Manfred*, casting a stern look at *Jerome*, implying a command of silence, pretended that on *Conrad*'s death he had placed her in sanctuary until he could determine how to dispose of her. *Jerome*, who trembled for his son's life, did not dare contradict this falshood, but one of his brethren, not under the same anxiety, declared frankly that she had fled to their church in the preceeding night. The Prince in vain endeavoured to stop this discovery, which overwhelmed him with shame and confusion. The principal stranger, amazed at the contradictions he heard, and more than half persuaded that *Manfred* had secreted the Princess, notwithstanding the concern he expressed at her flight, rushing to the door, said, thou traitor-Prince! *Isabella* shall be found. *Manfred* endeavoured to hold him, but the

other Knights assisting their comrade, he broke from the Prince, and hastened into the court, demanding his attendants. *Manfred*, finding it vain to divert him from the pursuit, offered to accompany him; and summoning his attendants, and taking *Jerome* and some of the Friars to guide them, they issued from the castle; *Manfred* privately giving orders, to have the Knight's company secured, while to the Knight he affected to dispatch a messenger to require their assistance.

The company had no sooner quitted the castle, than *Matilda*, who felt herself deeply interested for the young peasant, since she had seen him condemned to death in the hall, and whose thoughts had been taken up with concerting measures to save him, was informed by some of the female attendants that *Manfred* had dispatched all

his men various ways in pursuit of *Isabella*. He had in his hurry given this order in general terms, not meaning to extend it to the guard he had set upon *Theodore*, but forgetting it. The domestics, officious to obey so peremptory a Prince, and urged by their own curiosity and love of novelty to join in any precipitate chace, had to a man left the castle. *Matilda* disengaged herself from her women, stole up to the black tower, and unbolting the door, presented herself to the astonished *Theodore*. Young man, said she, though filial duty, and womanly modesty condemn the step I am taking, yet holy charity, surmounting all other ties, justifies this act. Fly; the doors of thy prison are open: My father and his domestics are absent; but they may soon return: Be gone in safety; and may the angels of heaven direct thy course!

Thou art surely one of those angels! said the enraptured *Theodore:* None but a blessed saint could speak, could act——could look like thee!—may I not know the name of my divine protectress! methought thou namedst thy father: Is it possible! can *Manfred*'s blood feel holy pity!—lovely Lady, thou answerest not——but how art thou here thyself? why dost thou neglect thy own safety, and waste a thought on a wretch like *Theodore?* let us fly together: The life thou bestowest shall be dedicated to thy defence. Alas! thou mistakest; said *Matilda*, sighing: I am *Manfred*'s daughter, but no dangers await me. Amazement! said *Theodore:* But last night I blessed myself for yeilding thee the service thy gracious compassion so charitably returns me now. Still thou art in an error; said the Princess; but this is no time for explana-

tion. Fly, virtuous youth, while it is in my power to save thee: Should my father return, thou and I both should indeed have cause to tremble. How! said *Theodore;* thinkest thou, charming maid, that I will accept of life at the hazard of aught calamitous to thee? better I endured a thousand deaths,— I run no risk, said *Matilda,* but by thy delay. Depart; it cannot be known that I assisted thy flight. Swear by the saints above, said *Theodore,* that thou canst not be suspected; else here I vow to await whatever can befal me. Oh! thou art too generous; said *Matilda;* but rest assured that no suspicion can alight on me. Give me thy beauteous hand in token that thou dost not deceive me, said *Theodore;* and let me bathe it with the warm tears of gratitude,——Forbear; said the Princess; this must not be. Alas! said *Theo-*

dore, I have never known but calamity until this hour—perhaps shall never know other fortune again: Suffer the chaste raptures of holy gratitude: 'Tis my soul would print its effusions on thy hand. Forbear, and be gone: Said *Matilda:*—How would *Isabella* approve of seeing thee at my feet? Who is *Isabella?* said the young man with surprize. Ah me! I fear, said the Princess, I am serving a deceitful one!—hast thou forgot thy curiosity this morning? Thy looks, thy actions, all thy beauteous self seems an emanation of divinity, said *Theodore*, but thy words are dark and mysterious,——speak, Lady; speak to thy servant's comprehension.—Thou understandest but too well! said *Matilda:* But once more I command thee to be gone: Thy blood, which I may preserve, will be on my head, if I waste the time in vain dis-

course. I go, Lady, said *Theodore*, because it is thy will, and because I would not bring the grey hairs of my father with sorrow to the grave. Say but, adored Lady, that I have thy gentle pity——Stay; said *Matilda;* I will conduct thee to the subterraneous vault by which *Isabella* escaped; it will lead thee to the church of St. *Nicholas*, where thou mayst take sanctuary.——What! said *Theodore*, was it another, and not thy lovely self that I assisted to find the subterraneous passage? It was; said *Matilda;* but ask no more: I tremble to see thee still abide here: Fly to the sanctuary,—To sanctuary said *Theodore:* No, Princess; sanctuaries are for helpless damsels, or for criminals. *Theodore*'s soul is free from guilt, nor will wear the appearance of it. Give me a sword, Lady, and thy father shall learn that *Theo-*

dore scorns an ignominious flight. Rash youth! said *Matilda*, thou wouldst not dare to lift thy presumptuous arm against the Prince of *Otranto?* Not against thy father; indeed I dare not: said *Theodore:* Excuse me, Lady; I had forgotten,—but could I gaze on thee, and remember thou art sprung from the tyrant *Manfred?*——but he is thy father, and from this moment my injuries are buried in oblivion. A deep and hollow groan, which seemed to come from above, startled the Princess and *Theodore*. Good heaven! we are overheard! said the Princess. They listened; but perceiving no farther noise, they both concluded it the effect of pent-up vapours: And the Princess preceding *Theodore* softly, carried him to her father's armory, where equipping him with a complete suit, he was conducted by *Matilda* to the postern——

gate. Avoid the town, said the Princess, and all the western side of the castle: 'Tis there the search must be making by *Manfred* and the strangers: But hie thee to the opposite quarter. Yonder behind that forest to the east is a chain of rocks, hollowed into a labyrinth of caverns that reach to the seacoast. There thou mayst lie concealed, till thou canst make signs to some vessel to put on shore and take thee off. Go! heaven be thy guide!—and sometimes in thy prayers remember—*Matilda! Theodore* flung himself at her feet, and seizing her lilly hand, which with struggles she suffered him to kiss, he vowed on the earliest opportunity to get himself knighted, and fervently intreated her permission to swear himself eternally her knight——E'er the princess could reply, a clap of thunder was suddenly heard, that shook the

battlements. *Theodore*, regardless of the tempest, would have urged his suit; but the Princess, dismayed, retreated hastily into the castle, and commanded the youth to be gone with an air that would not be disobeyed. He sighed, and retired, but with eyes fixed on the gate, until *Matilda* closing it, put an end to an interview, in which the hearts of both had drunk so deeply of a passion, which both now tasted for the first time.

Theodore went pensively to the convent, to acquaint his father with his deliverance. There he learned the absence of *Jerome*, and the pursuit that was making after the Lady *Isabella*, with some particulars of whose story he now first became acquainted. The generous galantry of his nature prompted him to wish to assist her; but the Monks could lend him no lights

to guess at the route she had taken. He was not tempted to wander far in search of her, for the idea of *Matilda* had imprinted itself so strongly on his heart, that he could not bear to absent himself at much distance from her abode. The tenderness *Jerome* had expressed for him concurred to confirm this reluctance; and he even persuaded himself that filial affection was the chief cause of his hovering between the castle and monastery. Until *Jerome* should return at night, *Theodore* at length determined to repair to the forest that *Matilda* had pointed out to him. Arriving there, he sought the gloomiest shades, as best suited to the pleasing melancholy that reigned in his mind. In this mood he roved insensibly to the caves which had formerly served as a retreat to hermits, and were now reported round the

country to be haunted by evil spirits. He recollected to have heard this tradition; and being of a brave and adventurous disposition he willingly indulged his curiosity in exploring the secret recesses of this labyrinth. He had not penetrated far before he thought he heard the steps of some person who seemed to retreat before him. *Theodore*, though firmly grounded in all our holy faith enjoins to be believed, had no apprehension that good men were abandoned without cause to the malice of the powers of darkness. He thought the place more likely to be infested by robbers than by those infernal agents who are reported to molest and bewilder travellers. He had long burned with impatience to approve his valour ——drawing his sabre, he marched sedately onwards, still directing his steps, as the imperfect rustling sound before

him led the way. The armour he wore was a like indication to the person who avoided him. *Theodore* now convinced that he was not mistaken, redoubled his pace, and evidently gained on the person that fled, whose haste increasing, *Theodore* came up just as a woman fell breathless before him. He hasted to raise her, but her terror was so great that he apprehended she would faint in his arms. He used every gentle word to dispel her alarms, and assured her that far from injuring, he would defend her at the peril of his life. The Lady recovering her spirits from his courteous demeanour, and gazing on her protector, said, Sure I have heard that voice before! Not to my knowledge, replied *Theodore*, unless as I conjecture thou art the Lady *Isabella*,—Merciful heaven! cried she, thou art not sent in quest of me, art

thou? and saying those words, she threw herself at his feet, and besought him not to deliver her up to *Manfred*. To *Manfred!* cried *Theodore*——no, Lady, I have once already delivered thee from his tyranny, and it shall fare hard with me now, but I will place thee out of the reach of his daring. Is it possible, said she, that thou shouldst be the generous unknown whom I met last night in the vault of the castle? sure thou art not a mortal, but my guardian angel: On my knees let me thank——hold, gentle Princess, said *Theodore*, nor demean thyself before a poor and friendless young man. If heaven has selected me for thy deliverer, it will accomplish its work, and strengthen my arm in thy cause——but come, Lady, we are too near the mouth of the cavern; let us seek its inmost recesses: I can have no tranquillity till

I have placed thee beyond the reach of danger. Alas! what mean you, Sir? said she. Though all your actions are noble, though your sentiments speak the purity of your soul, is it fitting that I should accompany you alone into these perplexed retreats? should we be found together, what would a censorious world think of my conduct? I respect your virtuous delicacy, said *Theodore;* nor do you harbour a suspicion that wounds my honour. I meant to conduct you into the most private cavity of these rocks, and then at the hazard of my life to guard their entrance against every living thing. Besides, Lady, continued he drawing a deep sigh, beauteous and all perfect as your form is, and though my wishes are not guiltless of aspiring, know, my soul is dedicated to another; and although——a sudden noise prevented *Theodore* from

proceeding. They soon distinguished these sounds, *Isabella!* what ho! *Isabella!*——the trembling Princess relapsed into her former agony of fear. *Theodore* endeavoured to encourage her, but in vain. He assured her he would die rather than suffer her to return under *Manfred*'s power; and begging her to remain concealed, he went forth to prevent the person in search of her from approaching.

At the mouth of the cavern he found an armed Knight, discoursing with a peasant, who assured him he had seen a lady enter the passes of the rock. The Knight was preparing to seek her, when *Theodore*, placing himself in his way, with his sword drawn, sternly forbad him at his peril to advance. And who art thou who darest to cross my way? said the Knight haughtily. One who does not dare more than he

will perform, said *Theodore*. I seek the Lady *Isabella;* said the Knight, and understand she has taken refuge among these rocks. Impede me not, or thou wilt repent having provoked my resentment. Thy purpose is as odious, as thy resentment is contemptible, said *Theodore*. Return whence thou camest, or we shall soon know whose resentment is most terrible. The stranger, who was the principal Knight that had arrived from the marquis of *Vicenza*, had galloped from *Manfred* as he was busied in getting information of the Princess, and giving various orders to prevent her falling into the power of the three Knights. Their chief had suspected *Manfred* of being privy to the Princess's absconding; and this insult from a man, who he concluded was stationed by that Prince to secrete her, confirming his suspicions, he made no

reply, but discharging a blow with his sabre at *Theodore*, would soon have removed all obstruction, if *Theodore*, who took him for one of *Manfred*'s captains, and who had no sooner given the provocation than prepared to support it, had not received the stroke on his shield. The valour that had so long been smothered in his breast, broke forth at once; he rushed impetuously on the Knight, whose pride and wrath were not less powerful incentives to hardy deeds. The combat was furious, but not long: *Theodore* wounded the Knight in three several places, and at last disarmed him as he fainted by the loss of blood. The peasant, who had fled on the first onset, had given the alarm to some of *Manfred*'s domestics, who by his orders were dispersed through the forest in pursuit of *Isabella*. They came up as

the Knight fell, whom they soon discovered to be the noble stranger. *Theodore*, notwithstanding his hatred to *Manfred* could not behold the victory he had gained without emotions of pity and generosity: But he was more touched, when he learned the quality of his adversary, and was informed that he was no retainer, but an enemy of *Manfred*. He assisted the servants of the latter in disarming the Knight, and in endeavouring to staunch the blood that flowed from his wounds. The Knight recovering his speech, said in a faint and faultering voice, generous foe, we have both been in an error: I took thee for an instrument of the tyrant; I perceive thou hast made the like mistake—it is too late for excuses —I faint——if *Isabella* is at hand—— call her—I have important secrets to —He is dying! said one of the atten-

dants; has nobody a crucifix about them? *Andrea*, do thou pray over him —Fetch some water, said *Theodore*, and pour it down his throat, while I hasten to the Princess——saying this, he flew to *Isabella*, and in few words told her modestly, that he had been so unfortunate by mistake as to wound a gentleman from her father's court, who wished e'er he died to impart something of consequence to her. The Princess, who had been transported at hearing the voice of *Theodore*, as he called to her to come forth, was astonished at what she heard. Suffering herself to be conducted by *Theodore*, the new proof of whose valour recalled her dispersed spirits, she came where the bleeding Knight lay speechless on the ground—but her fears returned, when she beheld the domestics of *Manfred*. She would again have

fled, if *Theodore* had not made her observe that they were unarmed, and had not threatened them with instant death, if they should dare to seize the Princess. The stranger, opening his eyes, and beholding a woman, said—Art thou——pray tell me truly——art thou *Isabella* of *Vicenza?* I am; said she: good heaven restore thee!—Then thou——then thou——said the Knight, struggling for utterance——seest—thy father——give me one——Oh! amazement! horror! what do I hear! what do I see! cried *Isabella*. My father! you my father! how came you here, Sir, for heaven's sake speak!——oh! run for help, or he will expire!—'Tis most true, said the wounded Knight, exerting all his force; I am *Frederic* thy father—yes, I came to deliver thee—It will not be——give me a parting kiss, and take——Sir, said *Theodore*,

do not exhaust yourself: suffer us to convey you to the castle——To the castle! said *Isabella;* is there no help nearer than the castle? would you expose my father to the tyrant? if he goes thither, I dare not accompany him—and yet, can I leave him! My child, said *Frederic,* it matters not for me whither I am carried: A few minutes will place me beyond danger——but while I have eyes to doat on thee, forsake me not, dear *Isabella!* This brave Knight—I know not who he is, will protect thy innocence——Sir, you will not abandon my child, will you! *Theodore* shedding tears over his victim, and vowing to guard the Princess at the expence of his life, persuaded *Frederic* to suffer himself to be conducted to the castle. They placed him on a horse belonging to one of the domestics, after binding up his wounds as

well as they were able. *Theodore* marched by his side; and the afflicted *Isabella*, who could not bear to quit him, followed mournfully behind.

CHAPTER IV.

The sorrowful troop no sooner arrived at the castle, than they were met by *Hippolita* and *Matilda*, whom *Isabella* had sent one of the domestics before to advertise of their approach. The Ladies causing *Frederic* to be conveyed into the nearest chamber, retired, while the surgeons examined his wounds. *Matilda* blushed at seeing *Theodore* and *Isabella* together; but endeavoured to conceal it by embracing the latter, and condoling with her on her father's mischance. The surgeons soon came to acquaint *Hippolita* that none of the marquis's wounds were dangerous; and that he was desirous

of seeing his daughter and the Princesses. *Theodore*, under pretence of expressing his joy at being freed from his apprehensions of the combat being fatal to *Frederic*, could not resist the impulse of following *Matilda*. Her eyes were so often cast down on meeting his, that *Isabella*, who regarded *Theodore* as attentively as he gazed on *Matilda*, soon divined who the object was that he had told her in the cave engaged his affections. While this mute scene passed, *Hippolita* demanded of *Frederic* the cause of his having taken that mysterious course for reclaiming his daughter; and threw in various apologies to excuse her Lord for the match contracted between their children. *Frederic*, however incensed against *Manfred*, was not insensible to the courtesy and benevolence of *Hippolita*: But he was still more struck with

the lovely form of *Matilda*. Wishing to detain them by his bedside, he informed *Hippolita* of his story. He told her, that, while prisoner to the infidels, he had dreamed that his daughter, of whom he had learned no news since his captivity, was detained in a castle, where she was in danger of the most dreadful misfortunes: And that if he obtained his liberty, and repaired to a wood near *Joppa*, he would learn more. Alarmed at this dream, and incapable of obeying the direction given by it, his chains became more grievous than ever. But while his thoughts were occupied on the means of obtaining his liberty, he received the agreeable news that the confederate Princes who were warring in *Palestine*, had paid his ransom. He instantly set out for the wood that had been marked in his dream. For three days he and his at-

tendants had wandered in the forest without seeing a human form: But on the evening of the third they came to a cell, in which they found a venerable hermit in the agonies of death. Applying rich cordials, they brought the saint-like man to his speech. My sons, said he, I am bounden to your charity—but it is in vain—I am going to my eternal rest——yet I die with the satisfaction of performing the will of heaven. When first I repaired to this solitude, after seeing my country become a prey to unbelievers—it is alas! above fifty years since I was witness to that dreadful scene! St. *Nicholas* appeared to me, and revealed a secret, which he bad me never disclose to mortal man, but on my deathbed. This is that tremendous hour, and ye are no doubt the chosen warriours to whom I was ordered to reveal my

trust. As soon as ye have done the last offices to this wretched corse, dig under the seventh tree on the left hand of this poor cave, and your pains will—Oh! good heaven receive my soul! With those words the devout man breathed his last. By break of day, continued *Frederic*, when we had committed the holy relicks to earth, we dug according to direction—but what was our astonishment, when about the depth of six feet we discovered an enormous sabre——the very weapon yonder in the court. On the blade, which was then partly out of the scabbard, though since closed by our efforts in removing it, were written the following lines——no; excuse me, Madam, added the Marquis, turning to *Hippolita*, if I forbear to repeat them: I respect your sex and rank, and would not be guilty of offending your ear with

sounds injurious to ought that is dear to you——He paused. *Hippolita* trembled. She did not doubt but *Frederic* was destined by heaven to accomplish the fate that seemed to threaten her house. Looking with anxious fondness at *Matilda*, a silent tear stole down her cheek: But recollecting herself, she said; Proceed, my Lord: Heaven does nothing in vain: Mortals must receive its divine behests with lowliness and submission. It is our part to deprecate its wrath, or bow to its decrees. Repeat the sentence, my Lord; we listen resigned. *Frederic* was grieved that he had proceeded so far. The dignity and patient firmness of *Hippolita* penetrated him with respect, and the tender silent affection with which the Princess and her daughter regarded each other, melted him almost to tears. Yet apprehensive that his forbearance to obey,

would be more alarming, he repeated in a faltering and low voice the following lines:

Where'er a casque that suits this sword is found,
With perils is thy daughter compass'd round;
Alfonso's *blood alone can save the maid,*
And quiet a long restless Prince's shade

What is there in these lines, said *Theodore* impatiently, that affects these Princesses? why were they to be shocked by a mysterious delicacy, that has so little foundation? Your words are rude, young man, said the Marquis; and tho' fortune has favoured you once——My honoured Lord, said *Isabella*, who resented *Theodore*'s warmth, which she perceived was dictated by his sentiments for *Matilda*, discompose not yourself for the glosing of a peasant's son: He forgets the reverence he owes you; but he is not accustomed—— *Hippolita*, concerned at the heat that

had arisen, checked *Theodore* for his boldness, but with an air acknowledging his zeal; and changing the conversation, demanded of *Frederic* where he had left her Lord? As the Marquis was going to reply, they heard a noise without, and rising to inquire the cause *Manfred*, *Jerome*, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. *Manfred* advanced hastily towards *Frederic*'s bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstances of the combat, when starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou? thou dreadful spectre! is my hour come?——My dearest, gracious Lord, cried *Hippolita*, clasping him in her arms, what is it you see? why do you fix your eye-balls thus?—What! cried *Manfred* breathless—dost thou

see nothing, *Hippolita?* is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone——to me, who did not——For mercy's sweetest self, my Lord, said *Hippolita*, resume your soul, command your reason. There is none here, but us, your friends—— What is not that *Alfonso?* cried *Manfred:* Dost thou not see him? can it be my brain's delirium?—This! my Lord, said *Hippolita;* this is *Theodore*, the youth who has been so unfortunate—— *Theodore!* said *Manfred* mournfully, and striking his forehead——*Theodore*, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of *Manfred*—but how comes he here? and how comes he in armour? I believe he went in search of *Isabella;* said *Hippolita*. Of *Isabella!* said *Manfred*, relapsing into rage——yes, yes, that is not doubtful——but how did he escape from durance in which I left him? was it *Isabella*, or this hy-

pocritical old Friar, that procured his enlargement?——And would a parent be criminal, my Lord, said *Theodore*, if he meditated the deliverance of his child? *Jerome*, amazed to hear himself in a manner accused by his son, and without foundation, knew not what to think. He could not comprehend, how *Theodore* had escaped, how he came to be armed, and to encounter *Frederic*. Still he would not venture to ask any questions that might tend to inflame *Manfred*'s wrath against his son. *Jerome*'s silence convinced *Manfred* that he had contrived *Theodore*'s release—And is it thus, thou ungrateful old man, said the Prince, addressing himself to the Friar, that thou repayest mine and *Hippolita*'s bounties? And not content with traversing my heart's nearest wishes, thou armest thy bastard, and bringest him into my own

castle to insult me! My Lord, said *Theodore*, you wrong my father: Nor he nor I are capable of harbouring a thought against your peace. Is it insolence thus to surrender myself to your Highness's pleasure? added he, laying his sword respectfully at *Manfred*'s feet. Behold my bosom; strike, my Lord, if you suspect that a disloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a sentiment engraven on my heart, that does not venerate you and yours. The grace and fervour with which *Theodore* uttered these words, interested every person present in his favour. Even *Manfred* was touched—yet still possessed with his resemblance to *Alfonso*, his admiration was dashed with secret horror. Rise; said he; thy life is not my present purpose.——But tell me thy history, and how thou camest connected with this old traitor here.

My Lord, said *Jerome* eagerly—Peace! impostor! said *Manfred;* I will not have him prompted. My Lord, said *Theodore,* I want no assistance: My story is very brief. I was carried at five years of age to *Algiers* with my mother, who had been taken by corsairs from the coast of *Sicily*. She died of grief in less than a twelvemonth—— the tears gushed from *Jerome*'s eyes, on whose countenance a thousand anxious passions stood expressed. Before she died, continued *Theodore,* she bound a writing about my arm under my garments, which told me I was the son of the Count *Falconara*——It is most true, said *Jerome;* I am that wretched father—Again I enjoin thee silence; said *Manfred:* Proceed. I remained in slavery, said *Theodore,* until within these two years, when attending on my master in his cruizes, I was

delivered by a Christian vessel, which overpowered the pirate; and discovering myself to the captain, he generously put me on shore in *Sicily*——but alas! instead of finding a father, I learned that his estate, which was situated on the coast, had, during his absence, been laid waste by the Rover, who had carried my mother and me into captivity: That his castle had been burnt to the ground, and that my father on his return had sold what remained, and was retired into religion in the kingdom of *Naples*, but where no man could inform me. Destitute and friendless, hopeless almost of attaining the transport of a parent's embrace, I took the first opportunity of setting sail for *Naples*, from whence, within these six days, I wandered into this province, still supporting myself by the labour of my hands; nor until yestermorn did

I believe that heaven had reserved any lot for me but peace of mind and contented poverty. This, my Lord, is *Theodore*'s story. I am blessed beyond my hope in finding a father; I am unfortunate beyond my desert in having incurred your Highness's displeasure. He ceased. A murmur of approbation gently arose from the audience. This is not all; said *Frederic:* I am bound in honour to add what he suppresses. Though he is modest, I must be generous——he is one of the bravest youths on Christian ground. He is warm too; and from the short knowledge I have of him, I will pledge myself for his veracity: If what he reports of himself were not true, he would not utter it —and for me, youth, I honour a frankness which becomes thy birth. But now, and thou didst offend me: yet the noble blood which flows in thy

veins, may well be allowed to boil out, when it has so recently traced itself to its source. Come, my Lord (turning to *Manfred*) if I can pardon him, surely you may: It is not the youth's fault, if you took him for a spectre. This bitter taunt galled the soul of *Manfred*. If beings from another world, replied he haughtily, have power to impress my mind with awe, it is more than living man can do; nor could a stripling's arm—My Lord, interrupted *Hippolita*, your guest has occasion for repose: Shall we not leave him to his rest? Saying this, and taking *Manfred* by the hand, she took leave of *Frederic*, and led the company forth. The Prince, not sorry to quit a conversation, which recalled to mind the discovery he had made of his most secret sensations, suffered himself to be conducted to his own apartment, after

permitting *Theodore*, tho' under engagement to return to the castle on the morrow (a condition the young man gladly accepted) to retire with his father to the convent. *Matilda* and *Isabella* were too much occupied with their own reflections, and too little content with each other, to wish for farther converse that night. They separated each to her chamber, with more expressions of ceremony and fewer of affection than had passed between them since their childhood.

If they parted with small cordiality, they did but meet with greater impatience, as soon as the sun was risen. Their minds were in a situation that excluded sleep, and each recollected a thousand questions which she wished she had put to the other overnight. *Matilda* reflected that *Isabella* had been twice delivered by *Theodore* in

very critical situations, which she could not believe accidental. His eyes, it was true, had been fixed on her in *Frederic*'s chamber; but that might have been to disguise his passion for *Isabella* from the fathers of both. It were better to clear this up——She wished to know the truth, lest she should wrong her friend by entertaining a passion for *Isabella*'s lover. Thus jealousy prompted, and at the same time borrowed an excuse from friendship to justify its curiosity.

Isabella, not less restless, had better foundation for her suspicions. Both *Theodore*'s tongue and eyes had told her his heart was engaged——it was true——yet perhaps *Matilda* might not correspond to his passion——she had ever appeared insensible to love: All her thoughts were set on heaven—why did I dissuade her? said *Isabella* to

herself: I am punished for my generosity—but when did they meet? where? ——it cannot be: I have deceived myself—perhaps last night was the first time they ever beheld each other——it must be some other object that has prepossessed his affections——if it is, I am not so unhappy as I thought; if it is not my friend *Matilda*—how! can I stoop to wish for the affection of a man, who rudely and unnecessarily acquainted me with his indifference? and that at the very moment in which common courtesy demanded at least expressions of civility. I will go to my dear *Matilda*, who will confirm me in this becoming pride——man is false—I will advise with her on taking the veil: She will rejoice to find me in this disposition; and I will acquaint her that I no longer oppose her inclination for the cloister. In this frame of mind,

and determined to open her heart entirely to *Matilda*, she went to that Princess's chamber, whom she found already dressed, and leaning pensively on her arm. This attitude, so correspondent to what she felt herself, revived *Isabella*'s suspicions, and destroyed the confidence she had purposed to place in her friend. They blushed at meeting, and were too much novices to disguise their sensations with address. After some unmeaning questions and replies, *Matilda* demanded of *Isabella* the cause of her flight? The latter, who had almost forgotten *Manfred*'s passion, so entirely was she occupied by her own, concluding that *Matilda* referred to her last escape from the convent, which had occasioned the events of the preceding evening, replied, *Martelli* brought word to the convent that your mother was dead

—Oh! said *Matilda*, interrupting her, *Bianca* has explained that mistake to me: on seeing me faint, she cried out, the Princess is dead! and *Martelli* who had come for the usual dole to the castle——And what made you faint? said *Isabella*, indifferent to the rest. *Matilda* blushed, and stammered——my father—he was sitting in judgment on a criminal——What criminal? said *Isabella* eagerly—A young man; said *Matilda*——I believe—I think it was that young man that——What, *Theodore?* said *Isabella*. Yes; answered she; I never saw him before; I do not know how he had offended my father—but as he has been of service to you, I am glad my Lord has pardoned him——Served me? replied *Isabella;* do you term it serving me, to wound my father, and almost occasion his death! Though it is but since yesterday that I am bles-

sed with knowing a parent, I hope *Matilda* does not think I am such a stranger to filial tenderness as not to resent the boldness of that audacious youth, and that it is impossible for me ever to feel any affection for one who dared to lift his arm against the author of my being. No, *Matilda*, my heart abhors him; and if you still retain the friendship for me that you have vowed from your infancy, you will detest a man who has been on the point of making me miserable for ever. *Matilda* held down her head, and replied; I hope my dearest *Isabella* does not doubt her *Matilda*'s friendship: I never beheld that youth until yesterday; he is almost a stranger to me: But as the surgeons have pronounced your father out of danger, you ought not to harbour uncharitable resentment against one, who I am persuaded did not know the

Marquis was related to you. You plead his cause very pathetically, said *Isabella*, considering he is so much a stranger to you! I am mistaken, or he returns your charity. What mean you? said *Matilda*. Nothing: Said *Isabella*, repenting that she had given *Matilda* a hint of *Theodore*'s inclination for her. Then changing the discourse, she asked *Matilda* what occasioned *Manfred* to take *Theodore* for a spectre? Bless me, said *Matilda*, did not you observe his extreme resemblance to the portrait of *Alfonso* in the gallery? I took notice of it to *Bianca* even before I saw him in armour; but with the helmet on, he is the very image of that picture. I do not much observe pictures; said *Isabella:* Much less have I examined this young man so attentively as you seem to have done——ah! *Matilda*, your heart is in danger——but let me warn

you as a friend—he has owned to me that he is in love; it cannot be with you, for yesterday was the first time you ever met—was it not? Certainly: replied *Matilda;* but why does my dearest *Isabella* conclude from any thing I have said, that—she paused—then continuing; He saw you first, and I am far from having the vanity to think that my little portion of charms could engage a heart devoted to you—may you be happy, *Isabella*, whatever is the fate of *Matilda!* My lovely friend, said *Isabella*, whose heart was too honest to resist a kind expression, it is you that *Theodore* admires; I saw it; I am persuaded of it; nor shall a thought of my own happiness suffer me to interfere with yours. This frankness drew tears from the gentle *Matilda;* and jealousy that for a moment had raised a coolness between these amia-

ble maidens, soon gave way to the natural sincerity and candour of their souls. Each confessed to the other the impression that *Theodore* had made on her; and this confidence was followed by a struggle of generosity, each insisting on yielding her claim to her friend. At length, the dignity of *Isabella*'s virtue reminding her of the preference which *Theodore* had almost declared for her rival, made her determine to conquer her passion, and cede the beloved object to her friend.

During this contest of amity, *Hippolita* entered her daughter's chamber. Madam, said she to *Isabella*, you have so much tenderness for *Matilda*, and interest yourself so kindly in whatever affects our wretched house, that I can have no secrets with my child, which are not proper for you to hear. The Princesses were all attention and an-

xiety. Know then, Madam, continued *Hippolita*, and you, my dearest *Matilda*, that being convinced by all the events of these two last ominous days, that heaven purposes the sceptre of *Otranto* should pass from *Manfred*'s hands into those of the Marquis *Frederic*, I have been perhaps inspired with the thought of averting our total destruction by the union of our rival houses. With this view I have been proposing to *Manfred* my Lord to tender this dear, dear child to *Frederic* your father——Me to Lord *Frederic!* cried *Matilda*——good heavens! my gracious mother—and have you named it to my father? I have: Said *Hippolita:* He listened benignly to my proposal, and is gone to break it to the Marquis. Ah! wretched Princess! cried *Isabella;* what hast thou done! what ruin has thy inadvertent goodness been

preparing for thy self, for me, and for *Matilda!* Ruin from me to you and to my child! said *Hippolita;* what can this mean? Alas! said *Isabella,* the purity of your own heart prevents your seeing the depravity of others. *Manfred,* your Lord, that impious man—Hold; said *Hippolita,* you must not in my presence, young Lady, mention *Manfred* with disrespect: He is my lord and husband, and——Will not long be so, said *Isabella,* if his wicked purposes can be carried into execution. This language amazes me; said *Hippolita.* Your feeling, *Isabella,* is warm: but until this hour I never knew it betray you into intemperance. What deed of *Manfred* authorizes you to treat him as a murderer, an assassin? Thou virtuous, and too credulous Princess! replied *Isabella;* it is not thy life he aims at—it is to separate himself from

thee! to divorce thee! to—To divorce me! To divorce my mother! cried *Hippolita* and *Matilda* at once——Yes; said *Isabella;* and to complete his crime, he meditates——I cannot speak it! What can surpass what thou hast already uttered? said *Matilda*. *Hippolita* was silent. Grief choaked her speech; and the recollection of *Manfred*'s late ambiguous discourses confirmed what she heard. Excellent, dear Lady! Madam! Mother! cried *Isabella*, flinging herself at *Hippolita*'s feet in a transport of passion; trust me, believe me, I will die a thousand deaths sooner than consent to injure you, than yield to so odious——oh!—This is too much! cried *Hippolita:* What crimes does one crime suggest! rise, dear *Isabella;* I do not doubt your virtue. Oh! *Matilda*, this stroke is too heavy for thee! weep not, my child;

and not a murmur, I charge thee. Remember, he is *thy* father still!——But you are my mother too; said *Matilda* fervently; and *you* are virtuous, *you* are guiltless!——Oh! must not I, must not I complain? You must not: said *Hippolita*—come, all will yet be well. *Manfred*, in the agony for the loss of thy brother, knew not what he said: perhaps *Isabella* misunderstood him: His heart is good—and, my child, thou knowest not all! There is a destiny hangs over us; the hand of Providence is stretched out—Oh! could I but save thee from the wreck!—yes, continued she in a firmer tone; perhaps the sacrifice of myself may atone for all—I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me. I will withdraw into the neighbouring monastery, and waste the remainder of life in prayers and tears for my child

and——the Prince! Thou art as much too good for this world, said *Isabella*, as *Manfred* is execrable——but think not, Lady, that thy weakness shall determine for me. I swear, hear me all ye angels——Stop, I adjure thee; cried *Hippolita:* Remember thou dost not depend on thyself; thou hast a father——My father is too pious, too noble, interrupted *Isabella*, to command an impious deed. But should he command it; can a father enjoin a cursed act? I was contracted to the son, can I wed the father?——no, Madam, no; force should not drag me to *Manfred*'s hated bed. I loath him, I abhor him: Divine and human laws forbid—and my friend, my dearest *Matilda!* would I wound her tender soul by injuring her adored mother? my own mother—I never have known another —Oh! she is the mother of both! cried

Matilda: Can we, can we, *Isabella*, adore her too much? My lovely children, said the touched *Hippolita*, your tenderness over-powers me——but I must not give way to it. It is not ours to make election for ourselves: Heaven, our fathers, and our husbands must decide for us. Have patience until you hear what *Manfred* and *Frederic* have determined. If the Marquis accepts *Matilda*'s hand, I know she will readily obey. Heaven may interpose and prevent the rest. What means my child? continued she, seeing *Matilda* fall at her feet with a flood of speechless tears——but no; answer me not, my daughter: I must not hear a word against the pleasure of thy father. Oh! doubt not my obedience, my dreadful obedience to him and to you! said *Matilda:* but can I, most respected of women, can I experience all this ten-

derness, this world of goodness, and conceal a thought from the best of mothers? What art thou going to utter? said *Isabella* trembling. Recollect thyself, *Matilda*. No, *Isabella*, said the Princess, I should not deserve this incomparable parent, if the inmost recesses of my soul harboured a thought without her permission—nay, I have offended her; I have suffered a passion to enter my heart without her avowal ——but here I disclaim it; here I vow to heaven and her——My child! my child! said *Hippolita*, what words are these! what new calamities has fate in store for us! Thou, a passion! Thou, in this hour of destruction—Oh! I see all my guilt! said *Matilda*. I abhor myself, if I cost my mother a pang. She is the dearest thing I have on earth —oh! I will never, never behold him more! *Isabella*, said *Hippolita*, thou

art conscious to this unhappy secret, whatever it is. Speak——What! cried *Matilda*, have I so forfeited my mother's love, that she will not permit me even to speak my own guilt? oh! wretched, wretched *Matilda!* Thou art too cruel; said *Isabella* to *Hippolita:* Canst thou behold this anguish of a virtuous mind, and not commiserate it? Not pity my child! said *Hippolita*, catching *Matilda* in her arms—Oh! I know she is good, she is all virtue, all tenderness, and duty. I do forgive thee, my excellent, my only hope! The Princesses then revealed to *Hippolita* their mutual inclination for *Theodore*, and the purpose of *Isabella* to resign him to *Matilda*. *Hippolita* blamed their imprudence, and shewed them the improbability that either father would consent to bestow his heiress on so poor a man, though nobly

born. Some comfort it gave her to find their passion of so recent a date, and that *Theodore* had had but little cause to suspect it in either. She strictly enjoined them to avoid all correspondence with him. This *Matilda* fervently promised: But *Isabella*, who flattered herself that she meant no more than to promote his union with her friend, could not determine to avoid him; and made no reply. I will go to the convent, said *Hippolita*, and order new masses to be said for a deliverance from these calamities.—Oh! my mother, said *Matilda*, you mean to quit us: You mean to take sanctuary, and to give my father an opportunity of pursuing his fatal intention. Alas! on my knees I supplicate you to forbear ——will you leave me a prey to *Frederic?* I will follow you to the convent —Be at peace, my child: said *Hippo-*

lita: I will return instantly. I will never abandon thee, until I know it is the will of heaven, and for thy benefit. Do not deceive me: said *Matilda*. I will not marry *Frederic* until thou commandest it.——Alas! What will become of me? Why that exclamation? said *Hippolita*. I have promised thee to return——Ah! my mother, replied *Matilda*, stay and save me from myself. A frown from thee can do more than all my father's severity. I have given away my heart, and you alone can make me recal it. No more: Said *Hippolita:* thou must not relapse, *Matilda*. I can quit *Theodore*, said she, but must I wed another? let me attend thee to the altar, and shut myself from the world for ever. Thy fate depends on thy father; said *Hippolita:* I have ill bestowed my tenderness, if it has taught thee to revere aught beyond

him. Adieu! my child: I go to pray for thee.

Hippolita's real purpose was to demand of *Jerome*, whether in conscience she might not consent to the divorce. She had oft urged *Manfred* to resign the principality, which the delicacy of her conscience rendered an hourly burthen to her. These scruples concurred to make the separation from her husband appear less dreadful to her, than it would have seemed in any other situation.

Jerome, at quitting the castle overnight, had questioned *Theodore* severely why he had accused him to *Manfred* of being privy to his escape. *Theodore* owned it had been with design to prevent *Manfred*'s suspicion from alighting on *Matilda*; and added, the holiness of *Jerome*'s life and c[illegible]cter secured him from the tyrant's wrath.

Jerome was heartily grieved to discover his son's inclination for that Princess; and leaving him to his rest, promised in the morning to acquaint him with important reasons for conquering his passion. *Theodore*, like *Isabella*, was too recently acquainted with parental authority to submit to its decisions against the impulse of his heart. He had little curiosity to learn the Friar's reasons, and less disposition to obey them. The lovely *Matilda* had made stronger impressions on him than filial affection. All night he pleased himself with visions of love; and it was not till late after the morning—office, that he recollected the Friar's commands to attend him at *Alfonso*'s tomb.

Young man, said *Jerome*, when he saw him, this tardiness does not please me. Have a father's commands already

so little weight? *Theodore* made awkward excuses, and attributed his delay to having overslept himself. And on whom were thy dreams employed? said the Friar sternly. His son blushed. Come, come, resumed the Friar, inconsiderate youth, this must not be; eradicate this guilty passion from thy breast——Guilty passion! cried *Theodore:* Can guilt dwell with innocent beauty and virtuous modesty? It is sinful, replied the Friar, to cherish those whom heaven has doomed to destruction. A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation. Will heaven visit the innocent for the crimes of the guilty? said *Theodore*. The fair *Matilda* has virtues enough—To undo thee: Interrupted *Jerome*. Hast thou so soon forgotten that twice the savage *Manfred* has pronounced thy sentence? Nor

have I forgotten, Sir, said *Theodore*, that the charity of his daughter delivered me from his power. I can forget injuries, but never benefits. The injuries thou hast received from *Manfred*'s race, said the Friar, are beyond what thou canst conceive.—Reply not, but view this holy image! Beneath this marble monument rest the ashes of the good *Alfonso*; a Prince adorned with every virtue: The father of his people! the delight of mankind! Kneel, headstrong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but sensations of sacred vengeance—*Alfonso!* much injured Prince! let thy unsatisfied shade sit awful on the troubled air, while these trembling lips——ha! who comes there?—The most wretched of women! said *Hippolita*, entering the choir. Good Father, art thou at leisu-

re?——but why this kneeling youth? what means the horror imprinted on each countenance? why at this venerable tomb—alas! hast thou seen aught? We were pouring forth our orisons to heaven, replied the Friar with some confusion, to put an end to the woes of this deplorable province. Join with us, Lady! thy spotless soul may obtain an exemption from the judgments which the portents of these days but too speakingly denounce against thy house. I pray fervently to heaven to divert them: said the pious Princess. Thou knowest it has been the occupation of my life to wrest a blessing for my Lord and my harmless children—One alas! is taken from me! would heaven but hear me for my poor *Matilda!* Father! intercede for her!—Every heart will bless her: cried *Theodore* with rapture——Be dumb, rash

youth! said *Jerome*. And thou, fond Princess, contend not with the Powers above! the Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away: Bless his holy name, and submit to his decrees. I do most devoutly: Said *Hippolita:* But will he not spare my only comfort? must *Matilda* perish too?—ah! Father, I came ——but dismiss thy son. No ear but thine must hear what I have to utter. May heaven grant thy every wish, most excellent Princess! said *Theodore* retiring. *Jerome* frowned.

Hippolita then acquainted the Friar with the proposal she had suggested to *Manfred*, his approbation of it, and the tender of *Matilda* that he was gone to make to *Frederic*. *Jerome* could not conceal his dislike of the motion, which he covered under pretence of the improbability that *Frederic*, the nearest of blood to *Alfonso*, and who was

come to claim his succession, would yield to an alliance with the usurper of his right. But nothing could equal the perplexity of the Friar, when *Hippolita* confessed her readiness not to oppose the separation, and demanded his opinion on the legality of her acquiescence. The Friar catched eagerly at her request of his advice, and without explaining his aversion to the proposed marriage of *Manfred* and *Isabella*, he painted to *Hippolita* in the most alarming colours the sinfulness of her consent, denounced judgments against her if she complied, and enjoined her in the severest terms to treat any such proposition with every mark of indignation and refusal.

Manfred, in the mean time, had broken his purpose to *Frederic*, and proposed the double marriage. That weak Prince, who had been struck

with the charms of *Matilda*, listened but too eagerly to the offer. He forgot his enmity to *Manfred*, whom he saw but little hope of dispossessing by force; and flattering himself that no issue might succeed from the union of his daughter with the Tyrant, he looked upon his own succession to the principality as facilitated by wedding *Matilda*. He made faint opposition to the proposal; affecting, for form only, not to acquiesce unless *Hippolita* should consent to the divorce. *Manfred* took that upon himself. Transported with his success, and impatient to see himself in a situation to expect sons, he hastened to his wife's apartment, determined to extort her compliance. He learned with indignation that she was absent at the convent. His guilt suggested to him that she had probably been informed by *Isabella* of his purpose.

He doubted whether her retirement to the convent did not import an intention of remaining there, until she could raise obstacles to their divorce; and the suspicions he had already entertained of *Jerome*, made him apprehend that the Friar would not only traverse his views, but might have inspired *Hippolita* with the resolution of taking sanctuary. Impatient to unravel this clue, and to defeat its success, *Manfred* hastened to the convent, and arrived there, as the Friar was earnestly exhorting the Princess never to yield to the divorce.

Madam, said *Manfred*, what business drew you hither? why did you not await my return from the Marquis? I came to implore a blessing on your councils: Replied *Hippolita*. My councils do not need a Friar's intervention: Said *Manfred*——and of all men living

is that hoary traitor the only one whom you delight to confer with. Profane Prince! said *Jerome;* is it at the altar that thou chusest to insult the servants of the altar?—but, *Manfred,* thy impious schemes are known. Heaven and this virtuous Lady know them—nay, frown not, Prince. The church despises thy menaces. Her thunders will be heard above thy wrath. Dare to proceed in thy curst purpose of a divorce, until her sentence be known, and here I lance her Anathema at thy head. Audacious rebel! said *Manfred,* endeavouring to conceal the awe with which the Friar's words inspired him; Dost thou presume to threaten thy lawful Prince? Thou art no lawful Prince; said *Jerome;* thou art no Prince—go, discuss thy claim with *Frederic;* and when that is done——It is done: Replied *Manfred: Frederic* accepts *Ma-*

tilda's hand, and is content to wave his claim, unless I have no male issue —as he spoke those words three drops of blood fell from the nose of *Alfonso*'s statue. *Manfred* turned pale, and the Princess sunk on her knees. Behold! said the Friar; mark this miraculous indication that the blood of *Alfonso* will never mix with that of *Manfred!* My gracious Lord, said *Hippolita*, let us submit ourselves to heaven. Think not thy ever obedient wife rebels against thy authority. I have no will but that of my Lord and the church. To that revered tribunal let us appeal. It does not depend on us to burst the bonds that unite us. If the church shall approve the dissolution of our marriage, be it so—I have but few years, and those of sorrow to pass. Where can they be worn away so well as at the foot of this altar, in

prayers for thine and *Matilda*'s safety? —But thou shalt not remain here until then: Said *Manfred*. Repair with me to the castle, and there I will advise on the proper measures for a divorce; ——but this meddling Friar comes not thither: My hospitable roof shall never more harbour a traitor—and for thy Reverence's offspring, continued he, I banish him from my dominions. He, I ween, is no sacred personage, nor under the protection of the church. Whoever weds *Isabella*, it shall not be Father *Falconara*'s started——up son. They start up, said the Friar, who are suddenly beheld in the seat of lawful Princes; but they wither away like the grass, and their place knows them no more. *Manfred* casting a look of scorn at the Friar, led *Hippolita* forth; but at the door of the church, whispered one of his atten-

dants to remain concealed about the convent, and bring him instant notice, if any one from the castle should repair thither.

CHAPTER V.

Every reflection which *Manfred* made on the Friar's behaviour, conspired to persuade him that *Jerome* was privy to an amour between *Isabella* and *Theodore*. But *Jerome*'s new presumption, so dissonant from his former meekness, suggested still deeper apprehensions. The Prince even suspected that the Friar depended on some secret support from *Frederic*, whose arrival coinciding with the novel appearance of *Theodore*, seemed to bespeak a correspondence. Still more was he troubled with the resemblance of *Theodore* to *Alfonso*'s portrait. The latter he knew had unquestionably died without

issue. *Frederic* had consented to bestow *Isabella* on him. These contradictions agitated his mind with numberless pangs. He saw but two methods of extricating himself from his difficulties. The one was to resign his dominions to the Marquis——Pride, ambition, and his reliance on ancient prophecies, which had pointed out a possibility of his preserving them to his posterity, combated that thought. The other was to press his marriage with *Isabella*. After long ruminating on these anxious thoughts, as he marched silently with *Hippolita* to the castle, he at last discoursed with that Princess on the subject of his disquiet, and used every insinuating and plausible argument to extract her consent to, even her promise of promoting the divorce. *Hippolita* needed little persuasions to bend her to his pleasure. She endea-

voured to win him over to the measure of resigning his dominions; but finding her exhortations fruitless, she assured him, that as far as her conscience would allow, she would raise no opposition to a separation, though without better founded scruples than what he yet alledged, she would not engage to be active in demanding it.

This compliance, though inadequate, was sufficient to raise *Manfred*'s hopes. He trusted that his power and wealth would easily advance his suit at the court of *Rome*, whither he resolved to engage *Frederic* to take a journey on purpose. That Prince had discovered so much passion for *Matilda*, that *Manfred* hoped to obtain all he wished by holding out or withdrawing his daughter's charms, according as the Marquis should appear more or less disposed to co-operate in his views.

Even the absence of *Frederic* would be a material point gained, until he could take farther measures for his security.

Dismissing *Hippolita* to her apartment, he repaired to that of the Marquis; but crossing the great hall through which he was to pass, he met *Bianca*. The damsel he knew was in the confidence of both the young Ladies. It immediately occurred to him to sift her on the subject of *Isabella* and *Theodore*. Calling her aside into the recess of the oriel window of the hall, and soothing her with many fair words and promises, he demanded of her whether she knew ought of the state of *Isabella*'s affections. I! my Lord! no, my Lord——yes, my Lord—poor Lady! she is wonderfully alarmed about her father's wounds; but I tell her he will do well, don't your Highness think so? I do not ask you, replied *Manfred*,

what she thinks about her father: But you are in her secrets: Come, be a good girl and tell me; is there any young man—ha!—you understand me ——Lord bless me! understand your Highness, no, not I: I told her a few vulnerary herbs and repose—I am not talking, replied the Prince impatiently, about her father: I know he will do well—Bless me, I rejoice to hear your Highness say so; for though I thought it not right to let my young Lady despond, methought his Greatness had a wan look, and a something—I remember when young *Ferdinand* was wounded by the *Venetian*——Thou answerest from the point, interrupted *Manfred;* but here, take this jewel, perhaps that may fix thy attention——nay, no reverences; my favour shall not stop here—come, tell me truly; how stands *Isabella*'s heart. Well! your Highness

has such a way! said *Bianca*——to be sure——but can your Highness keep a secret? if it should ever come out of your lips——It shall not, it shall not: Cried *Manfred*——Nay, but swear, your Highness—by my halidame, if it should ever be known that I said it—why, truth is truth, I do not think my Lady *Isabella* ever much affectioned my young Lord your Son——yet he was a sweet youth as one should see—I am sure, if I had been a Princess——but bless me! I must attend my Lady *Matilda;* she will marvel what is become of me—Stay; cried *Manfred;* thou hast not satisfied my question. Hast thou ever carried any message, any letter—I! good gracious! cried *Bianca;* I carry a letter? I would not to be a Queen. I hope your Highness thinks, though I am poor, I am honest——did your Highness never hear what Count *Mar-*

sigli offered me, when he came a wooing to my Lady *Matilda?* I have not leisure, said *Manfred*, to listen to thy tales. I do not question thy honesty: But it is thy duty to conceal nothing from me. How long has *Isabella* been acquainted with *Theodore?* Nay, there is nothing can escape your Highness! said *Bianca*——not that I know any thing of the matter—*Theodore*, to be sure, is a proper young man, and, as my Lady *Matilda* says, the very image of good *Alfonso:* Has not your Highness remarked it? Yes, yes,——no——thou torturest me: Said *Manfred:* Where did they meet? when?——Who! My Lady *Matilda?* said *Bianca*. No, no, not *Matilda: Isabella;* when did *Isabella* first become acquainted with this *Theodore? Virgin Mary!* said *Bianca*, how should I know? Thou dost know; said *Manfred;* and I must know; I

will——Lord! your Highness is not jealous of young *Theodore!* said *Bianca* ——Jealous! no, no: Why should I be jealous?——perhaps I mean to unite them——if I were sure *Isabella* would have no repugnance——Repugnance! no, I'll warrant her; said *Bianca:* he is as comely a youth as ever trod on Christian ground. We are all in love with him; there is not a soul in the castle, but would be rejoiced to have him for our Prince——I mean, when it shall please heaven to call your Highness to itself——Indeed! said *Manfred,* has it gone so far! oh! this cursed Friar! —but I must not lose time—go *Bianca,* attend *Isabella;* but I charge thee, not a word of what has passed. Find out how she is affected towards *Theodore:* bring me good news, and that ring has a companion. Wait at the foot of the winding staircase: I am going

to visit the Marquis, and will talk farther with thee at my return.

Manfred, after some general conversation, desired *Frederic* to dismiss the two Knights his companions, having to talk with him on urgent affairs. As soon as they were alone, he began in artful guise to sound the Marquis on the subject of *Matilda;* and finding him disposed to his wish, he let drop hints on the difficulties that would attend the celebration of their marriage, unless——at that instant *Bianca* burst into the room with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. Oh! my Lord, my Lord! cried she; we are all undone! it is come again! it is come again! What is come again! cried *Manfred* amazed!——Oh! the hand! the Giant! the hand!—support me! I am terrified out of my senses: Cried *Bianca*, I will not sleep in

the castle to-night; where shall I go? my things may come after me to-morrow——would I had been content to wed *Francesco!* this comes of ambition! What has terrified thee thus, young woman? said the Marquis: Thou art safe here; be not alarmed. Oh! your Greatness is wonderfully good, said *Bianca*, but I dare not—no, pray, let me go—I had rather leave every thing behind me, than stay another hour under this roof. Go to, thou hast lost thy senses: Said *Manfred*. Interrupt us not; we were communing on important matters—my Lord, this wench is subject to fits——come with me, *Bianca*——Oh! the Saints! no, said *Bianca* ——for certain it comes to warn your Highness; why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening——oh! if your Highness had believed *Diego!* 'Tis the same hand

that he saw the foot to in the gallery-chamber——Father *Jerome* has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days—*Bianca*, said he, mark my words——Thou ravest; said *Manfred* in a rage; be gone, and keep these fooleries to frighten thy companions—What! my Lord, cried *Bianca*, do you think I have seen nothing? go to the foot of the great stairs yourself——as I live I saw it. Saw what? tell us, fair maid, what thou hast seen: Said *Frederic*. Can your Highness listen, said *Manfred*, to the delirium of a silly wench, who has heard stories of apparitions until she believes them? This is more than fancy, said the Marquis; her terror is too natural and too strongly impressed to be the work of imagination. Tell us, fair maiden, what it is has moved thee thus. Yes, my Lord, thank your Greatness; said *Bianca*—

I believe I look very pale; I shall be better when I have recovered myself ——I was going to my Lady *Isabella*'s chamber by his Highness's order—We do not want the circumstances; interrupted *Manfred:* Since his Highness will have it so, proceed; but be brief. Lord! your Highness thwarts one so! replied *Bianca*——I fear my hair——I am sure I never in my life——well! as I was telling your Greatness, I was going by his Highness's order to my Lady *Isabella*'s chamber: She lies in the watchet-coloured chamber, on the right hand, one pair of stairs: So when I came to the great stairs—I was looking on his Highness's present here—Grant me patience! said *Manfred*, will this wench never come to the point? what imports it to the Marquis, that I gave thee a bawble for thy faithful attendance on my daughter? we want

to know what thou sawest. I was going to tell your Highness said *Bianca*, if you would permit me.——So as I was rubbing the ring—I am sure I had not gone up three steps, but I heard the rattling of armour; for all the world such a clatter, as *Diego* says he heard when the Giant turned him about in the gallery-chamber—What does she mean, my Lord! said the Marquis; is your castle haunted by giants and goblins? Lord, what, has not your Greatness heard the story of the Giant in the gallery-chamber? cried *Bianca*. I marvel his Highness has not told you —mayhap you do not know there is a prophecy—This trifling is intolerable; interrupted *Manfred*. Let us dismiss this silly wench, my Lord? we have more important affairs to discuss. By your favour, said *Frederic*, these are no trifles: The enormous sabre I was

directed to in the wood, yon casque, its fellow——are these visions of this poor maiden's brain?——So *Jaquez* thinks, may it please your Greatness: Said *Bianca*. He says this moon will not be out without our seeing some strange revolution. For my part I should not be surprized if it was to happen to-morrow; for, as I was saying, when I heard the clattering of armour, I was all in a cold sweat——I looked up, and, if your Greatness will believe me, I saw upon the uppermost banister of the great stairs a hand in armour as big, as big——I thought I should have swooned——I never stopped until I came hither——would I were well out of this castle! My Lady *Matilda* told me but yestermorning that her Highness *Hippolita* knows something —Thou art an insolent! cried *Manfred*—Lord Marquis, it much mis-

gives me that this scene is concerted to affront me. Are my own domestics suborned to spread tales injurious to my honour? Pursue your claim by manly daring; or let us bury our feuds, as was proposed, by the intermarriage of our children: But trust me, it ill becomes a Prince of your bearing to practise on mercenary wenches——I scorn your imputation; said *Frederic:* until this hour I never set eyes on this damsel: I have given her no jewel!—my Lord, my Lord, your conscience, your guilt accuses you, and would throw the suspicion on me—but keep your daughter, and think no more of *Isabella:* The judgments already fallen on your house forbid me matching into it.

Manfred alarmed at the resolute tone in which *Frederic* delivered these words, endeavoured to pacify him.

Dismissing *Bianca*, he made such submissions to the Marquis, and threw in such artful encomiums on *Matilda*, that *Frederic* was once more staggered. However, as his passion was of so recent a date, it could not at once surmount the scruples he had conceived. He had gathered enough from *Bianca*'s discourse to persuade him that heaven declared itself against *Manfred*. The proposed marriages too removed his claim to a distance; and the principality of *Otranto* was a stronger temptation, than the contingent reversion of it with *Matilda*. Still he would not absolutely recede from his engagements; but purposing to gain time, he demanded of *Manfred* if it was true in fact that *Hippolita* consented to the divorce. The Prince, transported to find no other obstacle, and depending on his influence over his wife, assured

the Marquis it was so, and that he might satisfy himself of the truth from her own mouth.

As they were thus discoursing, word was brought that the banquet was prepared. *Manfred* conducted *Frederic* to the great hall, where they were received by *Hippolita* and the young Princesses. *Manfred* placed the Marquis next to *Matilda*, and seated himself between his wife and *Isabella*. *Hippolita* comported herself with an easy gravity; but the young Ladies were silent and melancholy. *Manfred*, who was determined to pursue his point with the Marquis in the remainder of the evening, pushed on the feast until it waxed late; affecting unrestrained gaiety, and plying *Frederic* with repeated goblets of wine. The latter, more upon his guard than *Manfred* wished, declined his frequent challen-

ges, on pretence of his late loss of blood; while the Prince, to raise his own disordered spirits, and to counterfeit unconcern, indulged himself in plentiful draughts, though not to the intoxication of his senses.

The evening being far advanced, the banquet concluded. *Manfred* would have withdrawn with *Frederic;* but the latter pleading weakness and want of repose, retired to his chamber, gallantly telling the Prince, that his daughter should amuse his Highness until himself could attend him. *Manfred* accepted the party, and to the no small grief of *Isabella* accompanied her to her apartment. *Matilda* waited on her mother to enjoy the freshness of the evening on the ramparts of the castle.

Soon as the company were dispersed their several ways, *Frederic,* quit-

ting his chamber, enquired if *Hippolita* was alone, and was told by one of her attendants, who had not noticed her going forth, that at that hour she generally withdrew to her oratory, where he probably would find her. The Marquis during the repast had beheld *Matilda* with increase of passion. He now wished to find *Hippolita* in the disposition her Lord had promised. The portents that had alarmed him, were forgotten in his desires. Stealing softly and unobserved to the apartment of *Hippolita*, he entered it with a resolution to encourage her acquiescence to the divorce, having perceived that *Manfred* was resolved to make the possession of *Isabella* an unalterable condition, before he would grant *Matilda* to his wishes.

The Marquis was not surprized at the silence that reigned in the Prin-

cess's apartment. Concluding her, as he had been advertized, in her oratory, he passed on. The door was ajar; the evening gloomy and overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long woollen weed, whose back was towards him. The person seemed absorbed in prayer. The Marquis was about to return, when the figure rising, stood some moments fixed in meditation, without regarding him. The Marquis, expecting the holy person to come forth, and meaning to excuse his uncivil interruption, said, Reverend Father, I sought the Lady *Hippolita*——*Hippolita!* replied a hollow voice: camest thou to this castle to seek *Hippolita?*—and then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to *Frederic* the fleshless jaws and empty

sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angels of grace, protect me! cried *Frederic* recoiling. Deserve their protection! said the Spectre. *Frederic* falling on his knees, adjured the Phantom to take pity on him. Dost thou not remember me? said the apparition. Remember the wood of *Joppa!* Art thou that holy Hermit? cried *Frederic* trembling——can I do ought for thy eternal peace?——Wast thou delivered from bondage, said the spectre, to pursue carnal delights? Hast thou forgotten the buried sabre, and the behest of Heaven engraven on it?——I have not, I have not; said *Frederic*—but say, blest spirit, what is thy errand to me? what remains to be done? To forget *Matilda!* said the apparition —and vanished.

Frederic's blood froze in his veins. For some minutes he remained motion-

less. Then falling prostrate on his face before the altar, he besought the intercession of every saint for pardon. A flood of tears succeeded to this transport; and the image of the beauteous *Matilda* rushing in spite of him on his thoughts, he lay on the ground in a conflict of penitence and passion. Ere he could recover from this agony of his spirits, the Princess *Hippolita* with a taper in her hand entered the oratory alone. Seeing a man without motion on the floor, she gave a shriek, concluding him dead. Her fright brought *Frederic* to himself. Rising suddenly, his face bedewed with tears, he would have rushed from her presence; but *Hippolita* stopping him, conjured him in the most plaintive accents to explain the cause of his disorder, and by what strange chance she had found him there in that posture.

Ah! virtuous Princess! said the Marquis, penetrated with grief—and stopped. For the love of Heaven, my Lord, said *Hippolita*, disclose the cause of this transport! what mean these doleful sounds, this alarming exclamation on my name? What woes has heaven still in store for the wretched *Hippolita?*—yet silent!—by every pitying angel, I adjure thee, noble Prince, continued she, falling at his feet, to disclose the purport of what lies at thy heart—I see thou feelest for me; thou feelest the sharp pangs that thou inflictest——speak for pity!——does ought thou knowest concern my child?—— I cannot speak: cried *Frederic*, bursting from her—Oh! *Matilda!*

Quitting the Princess thus abruptly, he hastened to his own apartment. At the door of it he was accosted by *Manfred*, who flushed by wine and

love had come to seek him, and to propose to waste some hours of the night in music and revelling. *Frederic*, offended at an invitation so dissonant from the mood of his soul, pushed him rudely aside, and entering his chamber, flung the door intemperately against *Manfred*, and bolted it inwards. The haughty Prince, enraged at this unaccountable behaviour, withdrew in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses. As he crossed the court, he was met by the domestic whom he had planted at the convent as a spy on *Jerome* and *Theodore*. This man, almost breathless with the haste he had made, informed his Lord, that *Theodore* and some Lady from the castle were at that instant in private conference at the tomb of *Alfonso* in St. *Nicholas*'s church. He had dogged *Theodore* thither, but the gloominess of the

night had prevented his discovering who the woman was.

Manfred, whose spirits were inflamed, and whom *Isabella* had driven from her on his urging his passion with too little reserve, did not doubt but the inquietude she had expressed, had been occasioned by her impatience to meet *Theodore*. Provoked by this conjecture, and enraged at her father, he hastened secretly to the great church. Gliding softly between the isles, and guided by an imperfect gleam of moonshine that shone faintly through the illuminated windows, he stole towards the tomb of *Alfonso*, to which he was directed by indistinct whispers of the persons he sought. The first sounds he could distinguish were—Does it alas! depend on me? *Manfred* will never permit our union—No, this shall prevent it! cried the tyrant, drawing his

dagger, and plunging it over her shoulder into the bosom of the person that spoke—Ah! me, I am slain! cried *Matilda* sinking: good heaven, receive my soul! Savage, inhuman monster! what hast thou done! cried *Theodore*, rushing on him, and wrenching his dagger from him——Stop, stop thy impious hand! cried *Matilda;* it is my father! *Manfred* waking as from a trance, beat his breast, twisted his hands in his locks, and endeavoured to recover his dagger from *Theodore* to dispatch himself. *Theodore* scarce less distracted, and only mastering the transports of his grief to assist *Matilda*, had now by his cries drawn some of the monks to his aid. While part of them endeavoured in concert with the afflicted *Theodore* to stop the blood of the dying Princess, the rest prevented *Manfred* from laying violent hands on himself.

Matilda resigning herself patiently to her fate, acknowledged with looks of grateful love the zeal of *Theodore*. Yet oft as her faintness would permit her speech its way, she begged the assistants to comfort her father. *Jerome* by this time had learnt the fatal news, and reached the church. His looks seemed to reproach *Theodore:* but turning to *Manfred,* he said, Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of *Alfonso* cried to heaven for vengeance; and heaven has permitted its altar to be polluted by assassination, that thou mightest shed thy own blood at the foot of that Prince's sepulchre!——Cruel man! cried *Matilda,* to aggravate the woes of a parent! may heaven bless my father, and forgive him as I do! My Lord, my gracious Sire, dost thou forgive thy child?

Indeed I came not hither to meet *Theodore!* I found him praying at this tomb, whither my mother sent me to intercede for thee, for her——dearest father, bless your child, and say you forgive her——Forgive thee! murderous monster! cried *Manfred*——can assassins forgive? I took thee for *Isabella;* but heaven directed my bloody hand to the heart of my child——oh! *Matilda*——I cannot utter it—canst thou forgive the blindness of my rage! I can, I do! and may heaven confirm it! said *Matilda*——but while I have life to ask it——Oh! my mother! what will she feel!——will you comfort her, my Lord! will you not put her away? indeed she loves you——oh! I am faint! bear me to the castle——can I live to have her close my eyes?

Theodore and the monks besought her earnestly to suffer herself to be

borne into the convent; but her instances were so pressing to be carried to the castle, that placing her on a litter, they conveyed her thither as she requested. *Theodore* supporting her head with his arm, and hanging over her in an agony of despairing love, still endeavoured to inspire her with hopes of life. *Jerome* on the other side comforted her with discourses of heaven, and holding a crucifix before her, which she bathed with innocent tears, prepared her for her passage to immortality. *Manfred*, plunged in the deepest affliction, followed the litter in despair.

Ere they reached the castle, *Hippolita*, informed of the dreadful catastrophe, had flown to meet her murdered child: but when she saw the afflicted procession, the mightiness of her grief deprived her of her senses, and

she fell life-less to the earth in a swoon. *Isabella* and *Frederic*, who attended her, were overwhelmed in almost equal sorrow. *Matilda* alone seemed insensible to her own situation: every thought was lost in tenderness for her mother. Ordering the litter to stop, as soon as *Hippolita* was brought to herself, she asked for her father. He approached, unable to speak. *Matilda*, seizing his hand and her mother's, locked them in her own, and then clasped them to her heart. *Manfred* could not support this act of pathetic piety. He dashed himself on the ground, and cursed the day he was born. *Isabella*, apprehensive that these struggles of passion were more than *Matilda* could support, took upon herself to order *Manfred* to be borne to his apartment, while she caused *Matilda* to be conveyed to the nearest chamber. *Hippolita*, scarce more

alive than her daughter, was regardless of every thing but her: but when the tender *Isabella*'s care would have likewise removed her, while the surgeons examined *Matilda*'s wound, she cried, Remove me! never! never! I lived but in her, and will expire with her. *Matilda* raised her eyes at her mother's voice, but closed them again without speaking. Her sinking pulse and the damp coldness of her hand soon dispelled all hopes of recovery. *Theodore* followed the surgeons into the outer chamber, and heard them pronounce the fatal sentence with a transport equal to frenzy——Since she cannot live mine, cried he, at least she shall be mine in death!——Father! *Jerome!* will you not join our hands? cried he to the Friar, who with the Marquis had accompanied the surgeons. What means thy distracted rashness?

said *Jerome;* is this an hour for marriage? It is, it is, cried *Theodore,* alas! there is no other! Young man, thou art too unadvised; said *Frederic:* Dost thou think we are to listen to thy fond transports in this hour of fate? what pretensions hast thou to the Princess? Those of a Prince; said *Theodore;* of the sovereign of *Otranto*. This reverend man, my father, has informed me who I am. Thou ravest; said the Marquis: there is no Prince of *Otranto* but myself, now *Manfred* by murder, by sacrilegious murder, has forfeited all pretensions. My Lord, said *Jerome,* assuming an air of command, he tells you true. It was not my purpose the secret should have been divulged so soon; but fate presses onward to its work. What his hot-headed passion has revealed, my tongue confirms. Know, Prince, that when *Alfonso* set sail for

the Holy Land——Is this a season for explanations? cried *Theodore*. Father, come and unite me to the Princess; she shall be mine——in every other thing I will dutifully obey you. My life! my adored *Matilda!* continued *Theodore*, rushing back into the inner chamber, will you not be mine? will you not bless your——*Isabella* made signs to him to be silent, apprehending the Princess was near her end. What is she dead? cried *Theodore;* is it possible! The violence of his exclamations brought *Matilda* to herself. Lifting up her eyes, she looked round for her mother——Life of my soul! I am here: cried *Hippolita;* think not I will quit thee! Oh! you are too good; said *Matilda*——but weep not for me, my mother! I am going where sorrow never dwells—*Isabella*, thou hast loved me; wot thou not supply my fondness

to this dear, dear woman?——indeed I am faint! Oh! my child! my child! said *Hippolita* in a flood of tears, can I not withhold thee a moment?——It will not be; said *Matilda*——commend me to heaven——where is my father? forgive him, dearest mother——forgive him my death; it was an error——Oh! I had forgotten——dearest mother, I vowed never to see *Theodore* more—perhaps that has drawn down this calamity—but it was not intentional—can you pardon me?——Oh! wound not my agonizing soul! said *Hippolita;* thou never couldst offend me——alas! she faints! help! help!——I would say something more, said *Matilda* struggling, but it wonnot be——*Isabella*——*Theodore*—for my sake——Oh!—she expired. *Isabella* and her women tore *Hippolita* from the corse; but *Theodore* threatened destruction to all who

attempted to remove him from it. He printed a thousand kisses on her clay-cold hands, and uttered every expression that despairing love could dictate.

Isabella, in the mean time, was accompanying the afflicted *Hippolita* to her apartment; but, in the middle of the court, they were met by *Manfred,* who, distracted with his own thoughts, and anxious once more to behold his daughter, was advancing to the chamber where she lay. As the moon was now at its height, he read in the countenances, of this unhappy company the event he dreaded. What! is she dead! cried he in wild confusion ——a clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. *Frederic* and *Jerome* thought the last day was at hand. The latter,

forcing *Theodore* along with them, rushed into the court. The moment *Theodore* appeared, the walls of the castle behind *Manfred* were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of *Alfonso*, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the center of the ruins. Behold in *Theodore* the true heir of *Alfonso!* said the vision: And having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of St. *Nicholas* was seen, and receiving *Alfonso*'s shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory.

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces, acknowledging the divine will. The first that broke silence was *Hippolita*. My Lord, said she to the desponding *Manfred*, behold the vanity

of human greatness! *Conrad* is gone! *Matilda* is no more! in *Theodore* we view the true Prince of *Otranto*. By what miracle he is so, I know not—— suffice it to us, our doom is pronounced! shall we not, can we but dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of heaven? heaven ejects us—whither can we fly, but to yon holy cells that yet offer us a retreat?—Thou guiltless but unhappy woman! unhappy by my crimes! replied *Manfred*, my heart at last is open to thy devout admonitions. Oh! could—but it cannot be—ye are lost in wonder—let me at last do justice on myself! To heap shame on my own head is all the satisfaction I have left to offer to offended heaven. My story has drawn down these judgments: Let my confession atone—but ah! what can atone for usurpation and a murde-

red child! a child murdered in a consecrated place!——List, Sirs, and may this bloody record be a warning to future tyrants!

Alfonso, ye all know, died in the holy land——ye would interrupt me; ye would say he came not fairly to his end——it is most true——why else this bitter cup which *Manfred* must drink to the dregs? *Ricardo*, my grandfather, was his chamberlain—I would draw a veil over my ancestor's crimes ——but it is in vain! *Alfonso* died by poison. A fictitious will declared *Ricardo* his heir. His crimes pursued him——yet he lost no *Conrad*, no *Matilda!* I pay the price of usurpation for all! A storm overtook him. Haunted by his guilt he vowed to St. *Nicholas* to found a church and two convents, if he lived to reach *Otranto*. The sacrifice was accepted: the saint appear-

ed to him in a dream, and promised that *Ricardo*'s posterity should reign in *Otranto*, until the rightful owner should be grown too large to inhabit the castle, and as long as issue-male from *Ricardo*'s loins should remain to enjoy it——Alas! alas! nor male nor female, except myself, remains of all his wretched race!—I have done—the woes of these three days speak the rest. How this young man can be *Alfonso*'s heir, I know not—yet I do not doubt it. His are these dominions; I resign them—yet I knew not *Alfonso* had an heir——I question not the will of heaven—poverty and prayer must fill up the woeful space, until *Manfred* shall be summoned to *Ricardo*.

What remains, is my part to declare, said *Jerome*. When *Alfonso* set sail for the holy land, he was driven by a storm to the coast of *Sicily*. The other

vessel, which bore *Ricardo* and his train, as your *Lordship* must have heard, was separated from him. It is most true, said *Manfred;* and the title you give me is more than an outcast can claim——well! be it so—proceed. *Jerome* blushed, and continued. For three months Lord *Alfonso* was wind —bound in *Sicily*. There he became enamoured of a fair virgin named *Victoria*. He was too pious to tempt her to forbidden pleasures. They were married. Yet deeming this amour incongruous with the holy vow of arms by which he was bound, he determined to conceal their nuptials, until his return from the Crusado, when he purposed to seek and acknowledge her for his lawful wife. He left her pregnant. During his absence she was delivered of a daughter: But scarce had she felt a mother's pangs, ere she

heard the fatal rumour of her Lord's death, and the succession of *Ricardo*. What could a friendless, helpless woman do? would her testimony avail? —yet, my Lord, I have an authentic writing—It needs not; said *Manfred;* the horrors of these days, the vision we have but now seen, all corroborate thy evidence beyond a thousand parchments. *Matilda*'s death and my expulsion—Be composed, my Lord, said *Hippolita;* this holy man did not mean to recal your griefs. *Jerome* proceeded.

I shall not dwell on what is needless. The daughter of which *Victoria* was delivered, was at her maturity bestowed in marriage on me. *Victoria* died; and the secret remained locked in my breast. *Theodore*'s narrative has told the rest.

The Friar ceased. The disconsolate company retired to the remaining

part of the castle. In the morning *Manfred* signed his abdication of the principality, with the approbation of *Hippolita*, and each took on them the habit of religion in the neighbouring convents. *Frederic* offered his daughter to the new Prince, which *Hippolita*'s tenderness for *Isabella* concurred to promote: But *Theodore*'s grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourses with *Isabella* of his dear *Matilda*, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could for ever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul.

FINIS.